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Quality Issues in Teaching and Learning English at Tertiary Level in Ghana

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Quality Issues in Teaching and Learning English at Tertiary Level in Ghana

Solomon Ali Dansieh

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration
(Higher Education Management)

University of Bath
School of Management

November, 2015

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Solomon Ali Dansieh

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Summary

Available empirical data relating to quality generally and the application of quality assurance principles to language education at tertiary-level are scanty. This study explores how higher education institutions in Ghana apply QA mechanisms to enhance the teaching and learning of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). It examines how institutional contexts and cultures of the four case study institutions impact their QA processes. First, the rhetorical tensions and the apparent lack of consensus on the definition of the term “quality” are acknowledged alongside the enviable status of English as a “global lingua franca”; the relevance and pervasiveness of the EAP discipline in tertiary education circles within and without Ghana and the resultant need for quality assurance and enhancement in its teaching and learning.

One particular component of quality in higher education: the need for ensuring that programmes and services are fit for the purpose for which they were designed, and that the “clients” (students) are getting value for their money serves as the focus of the empirical research. The QA dimension of the research attempts to answer the question of whether students provide written feedback on their teaching and whether this is acted upon by the case study institutions in order to improve the EAP course. A combination of qualitative, quantitative, mixed-method approaches and documentary research is adopted to provide the framework for exploring QA and quality issues at each of the institutions involved in this study. The study first considers the quality challenges of higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa and Ghana within the context of policy. Subsequently, the unique features of each case study institution are quantified.

To enhance the depth of understanding so as to establish each case study institution’s QA mechanisms and processes for enhancing EAP teaching and learning, a comparative/multiple case study approach is adopted. The blend of methods facilitated exploring the issues and the drawing of conclusions as the strengths of each complements the other. The assessment of QA practices used in the teaching and learning of EAP in the case institutions revealed a number of interesting similarities and differences in terms of institutional context, quality culture, quality assurance mechanisms, pedagogy, and curriculum designs. Based on these findings, suggestions for EAP teaching quality enhancement in the case study institutions are subsequently made. Unique practices identified in the institutions are recommended for replication in other tertiary educational institutions. Suggestions for further and future research are also made followed by a brief account of the author’s professional and personal development during the DBA programme.

Glossary of Abbreviations

AAU	Association of African Universities
AFUF	Academic Facility User Fees
AU	African Union
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
COTVET	Council for Technical, Vocational Education and Training
CUCG	Catholic University College of Ghana
CBL	Competency-based Learning
DBA	Doctorate in Business Administration
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EdSep	Education Sector Development Project
EGAP	English for General Academic Purposes
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
ESAP	English for Specific Academic Purposes
GATS	General Agreements on Trade and Services
GETFUND	Ghana Education Trust Fund
GAFT	Ghana Association of French Teachers
GNA	Ghana News Agency
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HEM	Higher Education Management
HND	Higher National Diploma
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IUCG	Islamic University College, Ghana
L1	Mother Tongue
L2	Second Language
NIIT	National Institute of Information Technology
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NAB	National Accreditation Board
NABPTEX	National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations
NALAG	National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana
NCTE	National Council for Tertiary Education
PHEIs	Private Higher Education Institutions
PNDCL	Provisional National Defence Council Law
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SMS	Short Messaging System
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TALIF	Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund

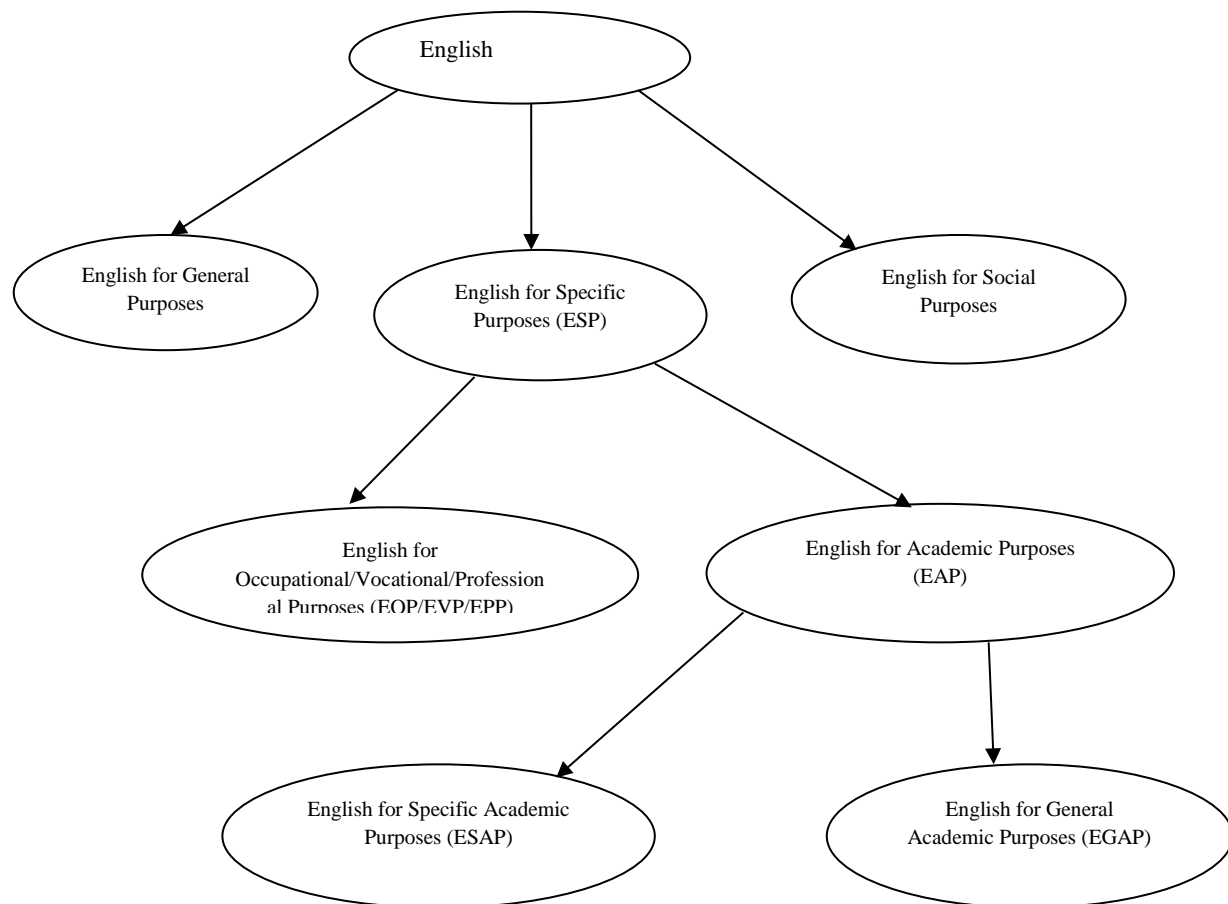
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TLA	Teaching, Learning and Assessment
TQM	Total Quality Management
TSL	Teaching of English as a Second Language
TTFPP	Third Trimester Field Practical Programme
TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
UDS	University for Development
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund
USA	United States of America
WASSCE	West Africa Senior High School Certificate Examinations
WTO	World Trade Organisation
www	Worldwide Web

Chapter 1 Overview of Study

1.1 Introduction

Over the last four decades the English language has witnessed increasing prominence as an ‘academic lingua franca’ (Crystal, 1997 and 2003). Similarly, the teaching and learning of the language for specific purposes has attracted unprecedented attention. This is manifested in the use of English not only as the leading medium of instruction in tertiary educational institutions, but also as the global language of research and publication. Its enviable status as the main international language of communication among professionals has contributed to increased research activity in the broader area of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and its offshoot, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) (Afful, 2007; Hyland and Hamp-Lyons, 2002; Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Swales, 1997; Robinson, 1991). As a specific purpose language teaching course, EAP is distinguishable from English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) through learner type, prospective or continuing student rather than a professional on the job (Robinson, 1991). EAP has a very broad scope that can be categorised under two main divisions: English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). While the former involves teaching of language and skills that cut across disciplines, the latter concentrates on imparting relevant skills and language to students from specific fields of study (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998). For purposes of illustrating how English language education can be classified according to purpose, the diagram below from Lee (2003) is adopted:

Figure 1 **Classification of English Language Education for Different Purposes**



From Lee, 2003: 197

This broad scope of the course adds to its pervasiveness and the possibility of its use for students of diverse academic backgrounds. Another commonly used term associated with EAP is ‘Study Skills’. It is considered as “identical in coverage to EAP or as part of EAP” (Ibid). In Ghana, while some tertiary educational institutions teach Study Skills as a stand-alone course, others teach it as part of the EAP course, terming it Language and Study Skills. In this thesis it is considered as part of EAP, taught to improve students’ reading speed, and ability to read for gist; academic writing skills; listening and note-taking skills during lectures, and academic speaking skills. These skills do not preclude grammar teaching though, as students’ grammatical difficulties can impact negatively on other skills. According to Mo (2005: 65), “Study skills are not something instinctively acquired but something consciously learnt.” The pervasiveness and

relevance of the EAP course in higher educational circles worldwide provides a good reason for conducting this research. The object of this study has been to explore and compare the application of quality assurance principles to EAP teaching and learning in four higher education institutions in Ghana. It is not aimed at prescribing novel principles for quality assurance, but to identify how context-specific QA systems work in the case institutions; what is being done differently there; whether they are replicable elsewhere, and to offer suggestions for quality enhancement. Methods employed in the research include interviews, observation, and administering an appropriate survey to respondents and the subsequent analysis of their responses.

1.2 The Popularity of EAP and the Need for Quality Assurance in its Teaching

Three interrelated trends: globalisation, internationalisation, and the resultant increased involvement of private providers in tertiary education account for the increasing popularity of English as an international language. This is captured, in part, by Long and Richards' observation that:

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a truly international phenomenon, linked in with the overall trend towards the globalisation of information exchange, communication and education (Long and Richards, 2001: xiv).

While agreeing with Knight and de Wit (1997) that globalisation has facilitated the cross-border flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values and ideas, this author believes that the trend has also necessitated the existence of a common communicative tool (English language) to avoid a tower-of-Babel-like scenario where everyone speaks their own language and none understands the other. This is corroborated by Richards that:

[T]he ever-growing need for communication skills in English has created a huge demand for English teaching around the world. ... The worldwide demand for English has created an enormous demand for quality language teaching and language teaching materials and resources. Learners set themselves demanding goals. They want to master English to a high level of accuracy and fluency (Richards, 2006: 1).

Globalisation calls for EAP teaching and learning in both native and non-native English-speaking environments with context-specific objectives. While its teaching in universities in native English-speaking countries is partly to provide students with academic literacy skills and partly to improve upon the linguistic and communicative competence of international students, most Sub-Saharan African HEIs teach it for both remedial (because performance in English language by high school leavers are becoming generally weak), and general academic purposes. A study conducted by Boateng and Agyepong (2003) and cited in Adu-Amoah (2008) on the performance of recent graduates in terms of competence showed 43 percent of employers rating graduates as “poor or inadequate”. According to the study, many Ghanaian employers complained about graduate deficiency in relevant skills like communication skills required for efficiency in the world of work. Thus, the importance of English language teaching in HEIs in Ghana is not only a learning ‘process’ issue, but is also to do with enhancing the employability of learners after graduation.

1.2.1 Privatisation and quality assurance

Through globalisation and the World Trade Organisation’s recent call for trade liberalisation in education services under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), there has been an upsurge of private sector participation in HE provision. Demand for quality (i.e. value for the money of both external and internal customers¹ of higher education) has become an urgent issue (Heyworth 1998: 7). Over the last two decades, many Sub-Saharan African countries have been actively involved in establishing quality assurance systems to regulate the activities of the numerous private for-profit providers that have emerged on the HE landscape. It is on record that most formal quality assurance bodies in the sub-region came into being due mainly to this trend (Effah and Senadza, 2008; Materu, 2007). Recently in Ghana, the National Accreditation Board (NAB) ordered two privately owned institutions, the Methodist and Central University Colleges, to withdraw 1,465 and 695 students respectively. This followed audit inspections by the NAB which revealed that the students were admitted to various degree programmes without the requisite passes (at least, grade C6) in core courses including English, Mathematics and Integrated Science in the West Africa Senior High School Certificate Examination (WASSCE)

¹ The concept of ‘internal and external customers’ is considered useful in language teaching enterprise as well, as it encompasses experts from within the institution such as administrators, and teachers and their colleagues from without like publishers and examining boards. By ‘external customers’ is meant “those from outside the organisation who purchase or use a service. “Internal customers those within an organisation who provide a service to colleagues and contribute in the service chain to the quality of the service delivered.” (Heyworth, 1998: 7)

(Daily Graphic, 2012a and 2012b). The mandates of these regulatory bodies are not limited to private tertiary educational institutions; they cover the academic activities of public providers as well. Since this is a study involving QA in teaching and learning of EAP at tertiary level, it would be expedient to also investigate the differences between public and private HEIs as regards their QA strategies. Chapters 2, 4 and 5 of this thesis provide more detailed accounts on the role of the privates and public HEIs in QA.

1.2.2 Quality assurance systems in Ghanaian higher education

The need to promote quality in institutions of higher learning has necessitated the establishment of regulatory bodies mandated to ensure that higher education institutions maintain quality standards and norms. Brennan and Singh (2010) assert that formal quality assurance systems constitute an integral part of changes in regulatory regimes for higher education governance. These impact on higher education cultures and affect key internal and external relationships such as the relationship between the state and the higher education sector and between institutional managers and academics.

In Ghana, there are three levels of quality assurance processes. QA procedures incorporate both internal assessment mechanisms as well as third party assessment involving a body external to the institution. Internally, tertiary educational institutions have governing councils, academic boards and various statutory and standing committees to ensure quality teaching, learning and management. As key stakeholders, students are duly represented on all relevant committees. In addition to provisions of their statutes, strategic plans, and other relevant institutional policy frameworks, higher educational institutions also have selection, appointments and promotion criteria as well as schemes of service. Periodic appraisals of staff and peer reviews are also common in assuring quality internally. As is the case in many countries including the UK, Ghana has national regulatory and supervisory bodies responsible for overseeing quality assurance within HEIs.

For purposes of external quality assurance, there exist four such statutory bodies with oversight responsibility for accreditation processes and the maintenance of standards in the private and public tertiary sectors of HE in Ghana. The National Accreditation Board (NAB) and the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) supervise and regulate the universities and other tertiary educational institutions. As stipulated in Article 2, Subsection 1 of the National

Accreditation Board Act (Act 744, 2007) the NAB is mandated to be “responsible for the accreditation of both public and private institutions as regards the contents and standards of their programmes” (Government of Ghana, 2007). The NCTE, on its part, is mandated under Section 2(1d) of the NCTE Act 454 (1993) “to recommend national standards and norms [...] and to monitor the implementation of any approved national standards and norms by the institutions” (Government of Ghana, 2003). The powers of the regulatory agencies tend to be curtailed because they are themselves funded by the state. Nevertheless, as Brennan and Singh (2010: 2) acknowledge, their reporting lines, composition and premises of the chosen type of evaluation system are often useful signals for the nature of the shifts in the balance of forces among various centres of power.

Internally, all universities in the country are expected to establish quality assurance units responsible for evaluating performance at the institutional, faculty and departmental levels. Notable among these functions are: screening and selection of applicants for admission to various programmes, staff and faculty appointment and promotion criteria, curriculum reviews, teaching and learning facilities, staff appraisal, moderation of examination questions through peer or external review and tracer studies. In the case of the polytechnics, examination questions are moderated by NABPTEX before they are administered. Marked scripts are also audited after examinations to ensure quality.

The assurance of professional standards at technical, vocational education and training (TVET) institutions is the responsibility of the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations (NABPTEX) and more recently, the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET). These include the polytechnics; but, with the recent passage of the Polytechnics Law (Act 745, 2007) they have been elevated to degree awarding institutions. Other professional bodies like the Institute of Chartered Accountants (ICA-Ghana), the Ghana Pharmacy Council, the Medical and Dental Council and Chartered Institute of Bankers also play significant roles in quality assurance in higher education institutions. At the regional level, Ghana belongs to the Association of African Universities (AAU), a regional initiative aimed at assuring quality in higher education. Globally, the existence of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies (INQAAHE) as a global QA body also provides Ghana with a strategic avenue for knowledge and experience sharing in quality assurance matters.

1.3 Need for quality in language education

Today, more is expected of tertiary students from English-speaking countries like Ghana, where English is the medium of instruction, to possess some minimum global competence in their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in academic and workplace communication. Whether it is in the public or market-driven private sector of HE, demand for quality tertiary education ‘products’ by key stakeholders of tertiary education, like governments, parents, students and industry also makes it imperative to assure quality in teaching and learning in general and in English language in particular. However, as Afful observes, EAP in Ghana has not undergone any systematic evaluation as in similar programmes in America, the United Kingdom and Australia (Afful, 2007: 142; Hyland 2002: 2). In a research conducted by the author in one of Ghana’s public universities, he observed that their Communication Skills (English for Academic Purposes) programme, which started somewhere in 1985, would need a major overhaul because of current realities. The situation in Ghanaian polytechnics is not very different. For instance, the EAP (Language and Communication Skills) curricula currently in use in these institutions were published some 11 years ago (NABPTEX, 2001) and are yet to undergo any major review.

Indeed, efforts have been made at various times at both regional and national levels for language policy frameworks as discussed in the next paragraph, but to what extent have they influenced quality enhancement in the EAP discipline in various higher educational institutions in Ghana? As cases of public and private tertiary educational institutions are compared in terms of their quality assurance strategies in teaching and learning of the discipline, it is hoped that the general findings would help illuminate an essential area in Ghanaian higher education and also contribute to the general debates on QA and EAP.

1.3.1 Language policy formulation efforts at local and regional levels in Africa

Though there have been some attempts at the regional level at formulating language policies for African countries, their focus has been more on the enhancement of the status of various indigenous languages, and not the teaching and learning of foreign languages like English. Branded variously as tools for “linguistic imperialism” and “a potential source of economic and intellectual control” (OAU, 1986; Phillipson, 1996; Neville, 2006:9; Mazrui, 2004: 54), it is not surprising that to date, no conscious efforts have been made at regional and national levels to set

standards for assuring quality in language education, especially English, similar to the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

1.3.2 Quality assurance and language education in Ghana

In Ghana, though there are policies on the language of education and some research on quality in education (UCC, 2005; Owu-Ewie, 2006), they fail to specifically address the issue of quality assurance in English language education. The silence in the literature on applying quality assurance concepts to language education in the country is quite worrying. In a multilingual context like Ghana's, the lack of consensus on which language should be used as the main medium of instruction at the lower primary level may be understandable because of the multiplicity of ethnic and linguistic groupings in the country, but the same cannot be said about the apparent lack of a clear policy framework for assuring quality in the teaching and learning of English, which happens to be the only official language of the country, at higher levels of education.

Available work on quality in education tends to be rather generic in scope and covers the entire formal education spectrum in Ghana. An EdQual²-sponsored research conducted by Ankmomah et al. (2005) entitled "A Review on the Concept of Quality in Education: Perspectives from Ghana", for instance, only touched on the broader dimensions of education quality. An earlier study conducted following the implementation of a five-year World Bank/Government of Ghana Tertiary Education Project³ (TEP, 1993 – 98) revealed that a policy framework developed by the government-appointed University Rationalisation Committee (URC) and successive policy-makers failed to define what was meant by 'academic quality' and the relevant mechanisms for assuring it. This rendered measuring its achievement rather difficult (Girdwood, 1999). Girdwood's assertion is in sharp contrast with Van DenBerghe's view that effective quality assurance of internal processes is realisable if there are clearly defined standards in place for their achievement and for the efficient resolution of emerging challenges (Van DenBerghe,

²EdQual is a research consortium led by the University of Bristol, UK and sponsored by the Department for International Development, UK. It is a research programme consortium on implementing education quality in low income countries.

³The TEP was designed to assist the Government of Ghana to restructure and enhance the quality of Ghana's tertiary education sector.

1997). One work that addresses the issue of quality and language teaching to some extent is a case study by Afful (2007:141) on academic literacy and communicative skills at a Ghanaian university in which he advocates curriculum change to address “issues of general and discipline-specific writing, foundation and remediation, and ... teaching approach.” With the gap thus identified in the literature, this study seeks to explore how quality assurance concepts could be applied to the teaching and learning of EAP in Ghanaian higher education circles.

1.4 The Research Context

1.4.1 Higher education in Ghana

The Association of African Universities (AAU) recommends that the definition of higher education should cover tertiary education institutions other than universities. UNESCO defines ‘higher education’ as

all types of studies, training or training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent State authorities (UNESCO, 1998).

Thus, higher education includes all post-secondary education such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of education (formerly teacher training colleges in Ghana), and other forms of post-secondary educational and research institutions (AU, 2008). One thing is clear: that ‘higher education’ covers studies at the post-secondary education level and/or beyond and usually culminates in the award of a degree, diploma, or certificate. For purposes of this study, analysis and discussions are limited to universities and polytechnics, usually termed “tertiary educational institutions” and shall be used interchangeably with the term “higher education institutions”.

In Ghana, these institutions are required to be at the forefront of

the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge production of human capital as well as the development of skills and adaptation of knowledge to meet developmental needs (Government of Ghana, 2002: 131).

The two main players in the realisation of these agenda in the country are the public and private providers of tertiary education. The state is the main funder of public tertiary institutions. In the private sector, there are three main providers, namely: religious bodies, for-profit organisations

and international entities. Currently, there are eight public universities, over 60 private universities and 10 polytechnics in Ghana. A description of the country's higher education landscape fits well into this picture depicted by Mohamedbhai:

The majority of universities in former colonies have been patterned on those in the north; ... and the curricula and programme structures of their degrees are not very different from those in northern universities (Mohamedbhai, 2002: 1).

As a former colony of Great Britain, Ghana has modeled her higher education after the British system. Universities, polytechnics and other institutions such as professional and specialist training centres constitute the HE sector. Various study programmes are run leading to the award of degrees, diplomas and certificates solely by tertiary education institutions or jointly with their local or foreign affiliates. Generally, Ghanaian universities run the Bachelors-Masters-Doctorate system. While programmes of state-funded tertiary institutions are still dominated by traditional courses like the humanities, applied and pure sciences, engineering, economics, business, law and education; those of their private counterparts, especially the foreign ones, are more professional in nature and include business studies (i.e. management and administration, accountancy, banking and finance); law, and information technology. Irrespective of their course offerings, one obligatory course that is taken in both public and private tertiary education sectors by all fresh persons during their first year of studies is EAP (locally called Communication Skills).

Generally, this study seeks to examine the quality of teaching and learning and to explore the application of quality assurance strategies in four of tertiary education institutions to ascertain their conformity to generally accepted quality standards as defined by the institutions themselves, regulatory bodies, and the relevant academic and professional communities. For reasons of scope, the research focuses on the quality assurance mechanisms in the four case study institutions with the unit of analysis being the teaching and learning of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The study does not cover other non-English language related courses or disciplines.

1.4.2 Why study quality assurance in tertiary-level English language teaching?

The need to undertake a study such as this was based on these two facts attested to by Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2002: 2), that:

1. [M]astering enough English, and the right English, [*for students*] to succeed in learning their subjects through the medium of English in textbooks, lectures, study groups, and so on, is a matter of great urgency.
2. [F]or countries that are trying to lift themselves into economic prominence or to remain major players on the world economic stage, producing an annual crop of graduates who can function in employment through English is a major issue.

As a developing country whose economy was recently classified as “lower middle income” by the World Bank, and with a growth rate of 14 percent by the end of 2011 according to International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates, Ghana’s economy was said to be the fastest growing in the world in 2011 (Ghanaweb, 2011). With an economy that thrives mainly on cocoa, gold, and tourism, the recent discovery and subsequent production of oil in commercial quantities has brought Ghana’s economy into focus on the world economic stage. Higher education is considered a major driving force in economic development, and the World Bank sees quality higher education as one of the surest ways of closing the gap between developing countries and the developed (World Bank, 2002). Graduates from Ghanaian tertiary educational institutions must therefore be able to communicate well in English, the ‘global lingua franca’, so they can function well anywhere in today’s ‘global village.’ Of late however, it has been observed that the general communicative competence of many graduates from Ghanaian universities and colleges in English language is rather abysmal. Thus, the observations of Hyland and his colleague cited earlier provide an apt description of Ghana’s situation and also serve as strong justifications for this study, a comparative case study involving four tertiary education institutions. It combines both qualitative and quantitative techniques for data gathering and analysis (discussed in more detail under Chapter 3).

1.4.3 Some socio-ethnic factors correlating with English language in Ghana

Since language learning cannot take place in a vacuum but must necessarily occur in a given social context (Barkhuizen, 2004), it is obvious that social and ethnic factors can influence second language acquisition (SLA). A distinction between the terms ‘social context’ and ‘social

factors' is thus necessary. In this study, Ellis' definition of the former as "the different settings in which L2 learning can take place" and the latter as "constellations of ... *factors* that influence learning outcomes" is adopted (Ellis, 1994: 197). Examples of social factors, according to him, include age, sex, social class, and ethnic identity, while 'context' "could be either the natural settings where learning occurs or educational settings where formal learning takes place" (Ibid.). Although English is the official language of Ghana, it is the L2 of the vast majority of students in tertiary education institutions. It is therefore important that an investigation of this nature takes into account some of the socio-cultural issues that impact language education in a multilingual context like Ghana's. To address these concerns, two questions worth considering are: first, are there any social or ethnic factors that correlate with language; and second, who would the English-Speaking minority be?

Within the context of this research, English language learning takes place at different socio-academic contexts where it is impacted by such distinctive social factors as individual institutional settings, cultures as well as players. Learners belong to different age brackets, sexes, social classes and ethnic backgrounds. The last two feature more prominently in the language attitudes of learners of English. Depending on learners' ethnic background, accent can be the most noticeable sociolinguistic factor directly affecting their language attitudes, especially in speaking and reading. Due to a subtle interplay of phonetic, morpho-syntactic and lexical features of L1 impacting on students' L2, it is quite easy to deduce from their accents which ethnic groups they belong to. For instance, some learners (or even teachers) from the Akan⁴ ethnic group in Ghana may have difficulty in pronouncing words with the /r/ and /l/ sounds. Through a linguistic process called 'free variation', native Akan speakers may use the sounds /d/, /l/, and /r/ interchangeably as in the Akan word for 'child', *akodaa*; *akolaa* or *akoraa*. These are all acceptable in that language. Thus, some students from the Akan ethnic group may write the word 'problem' /prɒbləm/ correctly, but pronounce it as '*plobrem*' /plobrəm/. Students from the Waala⁵ ethnic group, for similar reasons (impact of mother tongue (L1) on second/acquired language (L2), may also substitute the phoneme /s/ for /ʃ/; and /z/ for /ʒ/. Thus, the word

⁴ Akan is spoken in most parts of southern Ghana and south-eastern Côte d'Ivoire. They constitute the majority ethnic group in both countries. Figures from the 2000 Population Census indicate that about 43% the population of Ghana are native speakers of Akan. It belongs to the Kwa branch of the Niger-Congo family of languages.

⁵ The Wala live in Wa, the administrative capital of the Upper West Region and its surrounding villages. The language spoken by the Wala is known as Waalii, a Gur language belonging to the Niger-Congo, Oti-Volta group of languages.

‘attention’ /ətenʃn/ may be pronounced as ‘*atensin*’, /atənsɪn/; ‘fish’ /fɪʃ/ as ‘*fis*’ /fis/; and ‘measure’ /meʒə/ as ‘*meza*’ /meza/ in reading and spoken language. This phenomenon could result in some students with very strong native language accents feeling linguistically insecure. Thus, they may opt to remain silent in class or seminars and not contribute to discussions as a face-saving mechanism. A survey conducted by Guerini at the University of Ghana to ascertain attitudes of respondents from the Faculty of Arts towards their native Ghanaian accent confirmed this assertion, as 62.2 percent of respondents indicated that they were careful about their choice of the ‘correct’ pronunciation without an evident Ghanaian accent; while 37.8 percent disagreed (Guerini, 2007: 23). For pragmatic reasons, it would not be out of place to teach phonetics, (although a typical EAP course may not cover this), if the teacher realizes that these L1-related difficulties are interfering with learner performance in reading and speaking for academic purposes. As Robinson (1991: 101) rightly observes,

the concerns of EAP are not specific to English, but that many students are aiming at a higher level of academic achievement through English than in their first language ... Student difficulties here could derive not so much from lack of knowledge of the English language but from poor or undeveloped reading ability in their first language.

Outside the classroom, it is quite common on Ghanaian campuses to hear students reverting to the use of non-standard versions English such as pidgin in conversations, especially among male students. The Short Message Service (SMS) text message lingo is also used quite extensively in student circles. The latter in particular poses a major threat to students’ written communication skills because of the high tendency of students transferring non-standard abbreviations to their formal academic writing. In a recent survey on the possible impact of SMS texting on students’ writing at the Wa Polytechnic, 83% of student respondents and 73% of lecturers intimated that SMS language could harm their writing skills. As regards the effect of SMS text messaging on student course work, about 84.4% of students admitted having used abbreviated forms of words before (Dansieh, 2011). Another common practice among Ghanaian students is the adoption of code mixing and/or code switching in different communicative circumstances. This practice cuts across age and gender. While in the former phenomenon students would intersperse their L1 with words or phrases from their L2; they would switch completely to the use of L1 or L2 within the same communicative situation in the latter case. Students belonging to the same ethnic group

may use both code switching and mixing depending on how academic the topic being discussed is or how formal a given communicative situation is. They would often switch codes to accommodate a colleague who does not speak their L1 or sometimes to gossip.

The social class of learners could also impact negatively or positively on their English language skills. It is a well-known fact in Ghana that students from private basic schools (locally called “International Schools”) and private secondary schools in the country tend to speak better English and score higher grades at the Basic School and West Africa Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations than their peers from public schools (often referred to as “less endowed” schools). The few ‘elite’ public schools noted for their academic excellence, until the recent introduction of the Computerised School Placement System, used to be the preserve of wards of old students and the influential in Ghanaian society. Students from such schools felt more at ease when it came to speaking English because, not only did their parents speak English to them at home, but the basic and secondary schools they attended before coming to the university were also more ‘endowed.’

The English-speaking minority

Over the years, the English-speaking minority (i.e. students who consider English as their L1) in tertiary education institutions in Ghana has included Ghanaians born and raised abroad, wards of some diplomatic corps staff and exchange programme students from especially the US, Canada, Australia, and the UK. For instance, in Guerini’s survey at the University of Ghana (cited earlier), only four respondents indicated English as their L1 (Guerini, 2007). Since the stay of exchange students in the country is often short-term, they are normally exempted from taking the EAP course. The strong regional focus of the four case institutions also makes it quite interesting to discuss the role which English as a second language would have for most of the graduates. Historically, the use of English for official purposes dates back to the advent of the colonial administration in 1821. It has continued to enjoy that prestige even after independence in 1957 and remains the official language of the country to date. In spite of this status Guerini (2007: 4, 6) was right in pointing out that:

in Ghana the ability to speak English remains the prerogative of a minority of the population, although a certain degree of competence is an indispensable requisite for

holding public office. ... English is tied to the ideas of well-being and of economic development commonly associated to life in a Western country, and proficiency in English is perceived as a key requisite for occupying the most important and remunerative national positions.

What this implies is that, like their colleagues from other Ghanaian higher educational institutions, most graduates from the four case institutions involved in this study see not just the privilege of having received tertiary level education, but also an opportunity to enjoy what Guerini (2007: 18) terms “a considerable proportion of covert prestige ... attributed to competency in English, which is interpreted as a signal of high education and good financial conditions.”

1.4.4 Why locate the study in Wa Polytechnic, UDS, CUCG and IUC

The four tertiary educational institutions involved in this case study were all established within the last two decades, a period which also saw the genesis of the global upsurge in quality assurance activities in higher education circles. These institutions were chosen because of their unique and diverse backgrounds and missions, although they have in common the prime objective of providing service in higher education in Ghana. The University for Development Studies (UDS) and the Wa Polytechnic (Wa Poly), both public institutions, represent the northern half of the country; while the Catholic University College of Ghana (CUCG) and the Islamic University College, Ghana (IUCG), both of which are private and faith-based, represent the southern sector. Profiles of the case study institutions are available in Chapter 4.

The older universities and polytechnics were left out in this study because of the likelihood of the huge volumes of historical data that a research of this kind may generate. A look at the private sector was deemed expedient because, the need for governments to pay more attention to educational quality in Sub-Saharan Africa was partly triggered by the recent increased private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education (Materu 2007). The choice of subject institutions from both the south and northern sectors of Ghana was also informed by strategic reasons. As majority of the students of a given tertiary institution would typically come from its catchment area (environs), it would be interesting to explore socio-linguistic factors likely to affect their language learning. Learners’ socio-ethnic backgrounds, without doubt, can impact their language learning negatively, especially in the areas of grammar, mechanics, reading,

writing, and speaking (pronunciation). Including a polytechnic in this study was also very strategic because, as non-university tertiary institutions engaged in the production of medium and highly skilled human capital, polytechnics play a critical role in national development; yet, not very much is known about their quality assurance functions. The case study site, Wa Polytechnic, where the researcher works as a faculty member, was selected because of his familiarity with both the academic and non-academic staff. This places him at an ‘insider’ position with the potential biases, advantages and disadvantages that go with undertaking research in a familiar environment like one’s own workplace (Rabbitt, 2003: 1). Dwyer and Buckle (2009: 55) observe that “the personhood of the researcher, including her or his membership status in relation to those participating in the research, is an essential and ever-present aspect of investigation.”

Being an ‘insider’ researcher comes with its own challenges and opportunities. Local prior knowledge, for instance, could affect how respondents would be accessed and the kind of information they are likely to give. There could be unexpected outcomes as well. Considerable precaution was therefore required to maintain credibility and a balance between his role as a researcher and his personal/professional networks. To help reduce the potential biases associated with insider research, Dwyer and Buckle’s recommendation of “[d]isciplined bracketing and detailed reflection on the subjective research process, with a close awareness of one’s own personal biases and perspectives” served as a worthy guide. Opportunities likely to come with the researcher’s familiarity with the local institutional context and players are: easy access to participants and to ‘insider’ information that would not be released to him if he were an outsider. These were explored to the benefit of this research work. The University for Development Studies (UDS), which represents the public universities in this study, was chosen because of its uniqueness as a higher education institution set up in largely rural northern Ghana “to establish a clear conceptual and pragmatic meaning of the concept of quality within its contexts” (Abukari and Corner, 2010: 192). It is hoped that findings from the comparison will represent a balanced view of the QA situation in Ghanaian higher education.

1.5 Objectives of this Study

The object of this research has been quality and how quality assurance strategies are applied in the teaching and learning of EAP at tertiary level in Ghana. The research is aimed at analysing

relevant factors on the quality of teaching and learning in general and EAP in particular. As a general objective, the study seeks to contribute to the quality debate and EAP issues through the findings from the research into the application of quality concepts in English language teaching. Specific objectives of this study are to:

- examine the application of quality assurance and control procedures for quality EAP teaching and learning at tertiary level in Ghana;
- measure the extent to which student expectation about EAP teaching and learning has been met;
- examine the student, academic, and administrative perspectives of “quality” in language learning;
- identify aspects of the EAP curriculum that should be maintained or reviewed;
- compare QA standards used in EAP teaching/learning in Ghana with the CEFR;
- compare QA phenomena in public and private higher educational environments;
- offer suggestions for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning EAP in a multilingual context.

1.6 Central Research Question

As a means of exploring quality assurance in English language teaching and learning at tertiary level in Ghana so as to determine the extent of client satisfaction, this study primarily seeks to address the question:

1. How are quality assurance principles being applied for quality EAP teaching and learning at tertiary level in Ghana?

In examining that question, this thesis seeks to identify and shed light on the following specific questions on QA practices in public and private HEIs for quality EAP:

- a) What are the procedures for disseminating the QA models and processes in the case study institutions such that those involved are aware of them and contribute to their definition and development?
- a) What feedback mechanisms are in place for observing teaching and learning activities and how are the results of the quality control fed back into their planning and delivery process?

- b) What subject standards and criteria serve as benchmarks for EAP in the case study institutions?
- c) How does the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages fit into their various local contexts?
- d) What are the main differences or similarities between the privates and public HEIs in terms of the QA phenomena in their respective environments?

In addition, this thesis addresses a question on unique QA practices in the case study institutions as a means of sourcing relevant information for the recommendations section later in Chapter 5:

- 2. What things are the case study institutions doing differently that can be replicated elsewhere?

To analyse the responses to these questions, the study would examine how quality assurance and control procedures are typically applied to EAP teaching and learning at the case study institutions and compare these with the approaches commonly used in other fields like applied linguistics.

1.7 Contribution to Knowledge

The idea of quality in education is said to be as old as higher education itself. The 1990s witnessed quality assurance assuming centre stage in higher educational institutions all over the world. Consequently, huge volumes of studies have been undertaken on quality and its assurance in higher education. However, not much work has been done in the area of applying quality concepts to language teaching and learning. This research contributes to knowledge by exploring the application of quality assurance principles in the teaching and learning of EAP in a multilingual context like Ghana's.

Considering the pervasiveness of EAP in tertiary educational circles, assuring quality in its teaching and learning is crucial as it cuts across all academic disciplines. One thus expects that the literature would be replete with various research works on that field, but literature on the applicability of quality concepts to language teaching and learning is rather scant. It is even scantier when considered within the contexts of Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Ghana's in particular (Afful, 2007). Indeed, some research projects have been undertaken on quality

assurance in education, and others conducted on EAP too; but there seem to be none specifically addressing quality assurance in English language teaching and learning. In a country where English is the only official language and main medium of instruction from upper primary to university level, any research that seeks to examine how quality can be enhanced in the teaching and learning of the language for specific purposes in institutions of higher learning is certainly a worthwhile venture.

By exploring the quality assurance systems of four tertiary educational institutions in Ghana within the contexts of their mandates and unique visions, the thesis identifies the peculiarities of each institutional setting and how these impact their QA strategies. The originality of this thesis is borne by the fact that it is the first empirical study to explore the application of QA concepts to language teaching in Ghana. The study is also the first of its kind to consider responses made by Ghanaian tertiary educational institutions to EAP teaching and learning from an applied linguistic perspective and from the context of quality assurance.

Whether it is in the public or private sectors of education, the demand for quality by stakeholders is considered crucial. Tertiary educational institutions have the responsibility of assuring the public that they are “doing the right things the right way” through teaching and learning to produce quality graduates equipped with relevant skills like communication skills for national development. This thesis aims to contribute to the quality discourse in general and to provide some specific insights into the QA situation in Ghanaian higher education through language teaching and learning.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This literature review discusses current quality and quality assurance issues in higher education and the apparent lack of consensus in the quality rhetoric as a theoretical background for this DBA (HEM) thesis. It begins with a discussion of the micro processes of EAP as the unit of analysis so as to provide a link between them and the more macro issues of quality assurance. It also considers how the different approaches to quality can be applied in English Language teaching and learning. The main argument is that, language education, like any field of endeavour, must meet the expectations of its ‘clienteles’. Setting the relevant standards and criteria for assuring the quality of teaching and learning activities is therefore very essential. Considering the unique role of private higher educational institutions in quality assurance in Africa, the review would not be limited to the public HEIs but would also cover the private sector. This is to facilitate the comparison of QA phenomena in public and private higher educational environments in Ghana later in the thesis. After an introductory section on definitions and explanations, the review presents the “fitness for purpose” model of quality, and makes reference to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education’s (QAA, 2007) Subject Benchmark Statement for Languages and Related Studies, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) and the Quality Guide for the Evaluation and Design of Language Programmes (2000) as tools for exploring the effectiveness and quality of the teaching and learning of EAP in Ghana. The final part of the review looks at emic and etic implications of ‘effectiveness’ and suggests that, to do an objective assessment of the quality of EAP teaching and learning, there is need to consider both ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ accounts of the phenomena in both the public and private sectors of higher education in Ghana. The literature search would be guided by the following questions:

1. What is English for Academic Purposes (EAP)?
2. Is EAP relevant to tertiary level education?

3. a) How can quality assurance principles be applied in ensuring quality EAP teaching and learning?
- b) What subject standards and criteria can serve as benchmarks?
- c) What quality assurance mechanisms are currently in use in public and private higher education institutions in Ghana?
- d) How effective are the QA mechanisms at ensuring quality EAP teaching and learning at tertiary level in Ghana?

The chapter also makes references to some of the broader literature on quality assurance in higher education, regulatory mechanisms and frameworks including government policy documents, and relevant journal articles. As the unit of analysis, the review first considers EAP as a course, its distinctiveness and links to broader features of language education and contextual features as a background to the quality assurance discussion later.

2.1 EAP: A Theoretical Background

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). It is defined as “teaching English with the aim of facilitating learners’ study or research in that language” (Hyland and Hamp-Lyons, 2002:2). EAP programmes are therefore designed to equip students who are undergoing training through the medium of English with the requisite language and related skills. The conventional communication skills that are often targeted are: writing, reading, listening and speaking; while the related language skills include appropriate linguistic tools and ‘metalanguage’ that enable them in their analysis of the main features of the English language (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2007). Usually the teaching content is prepared in such a way that it matches the learner’s requirements (Robinson, 1991). Because of the illusiveness of the “general quality” idea, the quality literature stresses that the operational definitions of quality must be specific and “relate to a specific purpose.” The “fitness for purpose” concept of quality focuses on customers’ needs. Thus, the quality of EAP should be measurable based upon the principle of “fitness for purpose” in the student’s own view as well as that of the trainer. As a result, EAP is:

- Goal directed – students learn English because they need it for study and work purposes.
- EAP courses are based on needs analyses – that is, tasks that students have to do in English are clearly spelt out.

- Most EAP programmes have clearly specified time frames – In Ghana, the course is usually done during the first year of tertiary studies and could be described as a foundation course in preparation for academic courses. EAP learners are adults. For instance, research by a technical committee of the Wa Polytechnic Academic Board in 2006 revealed that English was every student's second language (L2); and that students had been studying the language for an appreciable period, with the mean year being 18¾ (Wa Polytechnic, 2006a).
- Students do not necessarily need specialist language – activities the students will engage in constitute the basis for courses.
- A very high level of proficiency may not be required – the need for students to succeed in their aims matters more.

(Robinson, 1991: 2-5)

One distinguishing factor that could be added to those cited from Robinson is that unlike other language programmes that require a period of residence abroad, EAP students may not need to travel abroad. Like many other academic disciplines, EAP has its own issues. For instance, there is the issue of specificity of the concept as to whether students should be taught skills and academic features of language that are common to different disciplines or whether EAP should be focused on specific disciplines (Lis, 2010:184). Coffey (1984) has been acknowledged as the first to distinguish 'common core' and 'subject specific' EAP, while the division of EAP into English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) has been ascribed to Blue (1988) (Ibid.). Based upon this, EAP has been commonly divided into two branches: EGAP and ESAP. EGAP tends to emphasize listening, speaking, reading and writing as relevant skills associated with the day-to-day study activities of students. ESAP on the other hand seeks to help students put into practice skills acquired in EGAP by applying them to actual subject tasks like in understanding lectures, reading texts, or writing essays and or reports. It is interesting to note that the Ghanaian version of EAP combines elements of both EGAP and ESAP as later discussions will reveal. Two questions worth considering at this point are: 1. What situations then may necessitate the teaching of EAP? 2. Does the distinctiveness of EAP have any implications for QA practices?

2.1.1 Possible contexts for EAP teaching

Different situations may warrant the teaching of EAP. Just like QA, national and institutional contexts play a critical role in determining the content of the programme. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998: 34 – 41) identify four types of situations in which EAP is taught:

- an English speaking country, where international students join tertiary education institutions (e.g. USA, UK, Australia);
- ESL situations, where English is mainly used at all levels of education but in everyday situation national language dominate (e.g. Anglophone countries in Africa, South East Asian countries);
- situations in which only certain subjects are taught in English (i.e. Medicine, Engineering, Science subjects) and the national language has dominant position in the school system (e.g. Middle East);
- ESP situations where subjects are taught in the national language (Latin America, South East Asia, mainland Europe, Scandinavia). (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998).

EAP teaching in Ghana falls within the second scenario described by the co-authors. As a former British colony, not only is English the official language in the country, it is also the main medium of instruction from primary through tertiary levels of education. EAP, termed locally as Communication/Communicative Skills or Language and Study Skills in some contexts, is a key course taught in tertiary education institutions to help undergraduates acquire relevant academic literacy skills (Afful, 2007). Tertiary students, irrespective of their fields of specialty, take the course even if for a limited time-frame. It is considered as a transitional course to re-orient undergraduates linguistically to metamorphose from the use of high school lingo to tertiary. As a general course that cuts across fields of study, its importance cannot be overemphasized. The next paragraph provides some justification for its choice as the unit of analysis in this study.

2.1.2 Why EAP?

The choice of EAP as the unit of analysis was informed by its pervasiveness as a course in higher education institutions in Ghana. As the lingua-franca of Ghana, English is used as the medium of

instruction from primary through tertiary levels of education. It is an acknowledged fact that in most post-colonial countries indigenous varieties of English have emerged different from British standards. This has led to some scholars wondering what the appropriate EAP model should be in these countries (Kachru, 1988). As Flowerdew and Peacock (2001: 23) rightly observed, though the indigenous variety may enjoy greater currency locally, the international standard would be more useful when it comes to access to international literature, interaction with other academics internationally and publication of their research results in international journals. Locally, we have what is called “Ghanaian English;” however, due to the reasons cited, Standard English is the preferred medium of instruction in Ghanaian HEIs. Globally, the EAP discipline is expanding within universities and other tertiary education institutions. In addition, challenges engendered by globalisation and internationalisation have immensely contributed to the enhancement of the status of English as a language of international diplomacy, business, information technology, and higher education delivery. In the academic environment English has assumed a dominant role as an academic lingua-franca. Hyland (2006) for instance observes the rapid loss of linguistic diversity in academic publications all over the world. By making their online publications available to libraries, English-medium journals are making a greater impact, as researchers are more likely to cite them. It is estimated that 95% of all publications in *Science Citation Index* are English-medium publications. EAP is a panacea for the poor writing skills of most academics whose mother tongue is not English, because as Hyland notes, such academics face the challenge of meeting the rhetorical standards demanded by editors.

Concerns have also been expressed locally and internationally about falling standards in the communicative skills (especially writing skills) of undergraduate students even in Anglophone countries (Fry et al., 2009; Afful, 2007; Jibril, 2003). While Afful reports on the unfortunate phenomenon in Ghana, Jibril also discloses that the situation in Nigeria is none the better. There has been a decline in proficiency in English at all levels of the educational system, with poor communicative competence being the major cause of failure in public examinations both at the secondary and the higher educational levels (Aful, 2007; Jibril, 2003). However, not much has been done on EAP in the field of research. Hamp-Lyons for instance attests that EAP is:

a thriving and important aspect of TESOL that has so far received less attention from researchers than it deserves...[and is] more complex and potentially problematic than

most English language teachers recognize in the beginning of their EAP teaching.

(Hamp-Lyons, 2001: 130).

Commenting on the impact of English as a medium of instruction in African higher education, Teferra also observes that language is one of the hidden yet subversive elements that undermines the quality of higher education across Africa. In the literature to date, language is often relegated to the bottom of the list of problems that plague African higher education (Teferra and Altbach, 2003: 111).

Considering its prominence as an instrument of educational delivery, the impact of English language on higher education across the continent cannot be overemphasized. One would therefore expect that when addressing issues that have the potential of compromising the quality of African higher education, language would be one of the most researched areas. Yet, in the body of literature is a yawning gap as it fails to adequately recognise or even discuss the language challenge in order to address issues affecting quality in higher education. This paper aims at exploring the application quality assurance principles in teaching and learning in general and the impartation and impact of the EAP course in particular in Ghanaian higher education. To situate the unit of analysis within the context of the more macro issues of quality and quality assurance, the following question would be considered:

Quality of what? - *A lecture?* - *A lecturer?* - *A course?* - *An institution?*

Like any other academic course, EAP instruction is carried out by teacher/teachers in keeping with certain accepted standards and subject benchmarks; within a specific timeframe and institutional context. It is the conscious and collective implementation of the processes and procedures that lead to the eventual achievement of quality learning outcomes. This study would therefore examine how the four case study institutions manage their strategies to guarantee quality EAP, and also how the assurance of the quality of the discipline contributes to higher-quality learning of English among students. It is hoped that the findings would serve the broad purpose of contributing to knowledge and also provide a basis for recommendations for quality enhancement. In order to establish criteria and set standards for EAP teaching and learning, subsequent paragraphs examine the quality literature to determine the potential relevance of different quality concepts and theories to the discipline.

2.2 Quality: Some Theoretical Considerations

The notion of ‘quality’ in higher education is arguably as old as higher education itself, as the quest for quality has always been a priority in educational institutions (Amaral, 2005; Materu, 2007). Brennan and Shah (2000) corroborate this in their observation that quality was not invented in the last decade of the 20th century, since universities and other institutions in academe have always had their own mechanisms for assuring quality. In discussing QA issues, one cannot but wade into the “quality” rhetoric since the two terms tend to be intrinsically intertwined. A brief discussion of the term “quality” as a prelude to the QA process would therefore not be out of place.

A review of the literature reveals that there is a lot of rhetoric around issues of ‘quality’, a concept which has been defined differently in different contexts. Quality guidelines provided by gurus like Deming, Juran and Crosby, though originating from business and industry, have implications for higher education too. There are different interest groups in HE such as institutional leaderships, QA professionals, teaching staff, middle level managers, students, and various external stakeholders. The different quality concepts have more or less to offer each of them, as far as their various interests and values are concerned (Brundrett and Rhodes, 2011). Many educationists however tend to be skeptical about the appropriateness of transplanting models that have worked well for private industry in such a social environment as education. This is because of the conflicting views among educationists as to what truly qualifies as a ‘desirable outcome’ (Brundrett and Rhodes, 2011; Becket and Brookes, 2008; Vlasceanu et al., 2007). Crosby’s definition of quality as: “the Zero Defect concept... the thought that everyone should do things right the first time”, for instance, has been rejected on the grounds that mistakes are bound to come, and sometimes even needful because they present an opportunity for a new learning experience and progress (Crosby, 1979:9; Nightingale and O’neil, 1994:165). Similarly, Juran’s interpretation of quality as “fitness for use” (Juran, 1989:15) has been criticized by Green (1994:15) because it tends to blur the purpose of higher education. Article 11, clause (a) of the World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century: Vision and Action states, in part, that

Quality in Higher education is a multidimensional concept, which should embrace all functions, and activities: teaching, and academic programmes, research and scholarship,

staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community, and the academic environment. (UNESCO, 1998)

HEIs are similar in terms of their core business – ensuring quality in teaching, learning and research; however the visions and missions aimed at enhancing the quality of these activities vary from one institution to the other. ‘Academic quality’ has been defined by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) as “describing how well the learning opportunities available to students help them to achieve their award” (QAA, 2007). Expressing a similar view, Mishra observes that

quality in higher education means the educational process is such that it ensures students achieve their goals and thereby satisfies the needs of the society and help in national development (Mishra, 2006: 15).

Upon a critical examination of the various dimensions of ‘quality’ as portrayed in the literature, quality in higher education has been sub-categorised under the following five sets of dimensions:

- Quality as exceptional or excellence: This denotes distinctiveness or high standards. Proponents of quality as excellence hold an elitist academic view that only the best standards of excellence are good enough reflection of true academic quality.
- Quality as perfection or consistency: This focuses on measuring process standards rather than outcome standards. It implies “zero defects”.
- Quality as transformation: It is considered an ongoing process and concerns how the learning process helps develop and empower the student. By extension, it also implies the enhancement of customer satisfaction.
- Quality as fitness for purpose: It refers to how the products or services fit the avowed purpose. It focuses on the processes that operate in the institution or programme towards the fulfillment of its objectives and mission.
- Quality as value for money: It refers to how stakeholders measure inputs (‘provision’), processes, or outcomes against monetary cost. Quality in this sense is seen as return on investment, with “efficiency” and “effectiveness” being the guidewords.

(Vlasceanu et al, 2007; Newton, 2006; Harvey, 2006; Harvey and Knight, 1995; Harvey and Green, 1993)

Ironically, none of the approaches in the spectrum of definitions of ‘quality’ seems to be sacrosanct and/or universal, as each of them has advantages and disadvantages. What may be suitable for a specific national context or one point in time may not be fit for another, implying that ‘quality’ can mean different things in different national or institutional contexts. This apparent lack of consensus on the definition of ‘quality’ is aptly described by these frequently cited words of Pirsig’s cited in Mishra, (2006: 11):

Quality... You know what it is, yet you don’t know what it is. But that’s self-contradictory. But some things are better than others, that is, they have more quality. But when you try to say what quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes *poof!* There is nothing to talk about it. But if you can’t say what Quality is, how do you know what it is, or how do you know that it even exists? If no one knows what it is, then for all practical purposes, it doesn’t exist at all. But for all practical purposes it *really* does exist ... So round and round you go, spinning mental wheels and nowhere finding any place to get traction. What the hell is quality? What is it? (Pirsig, 1974: 171)

Drawing a clear line between discourses and perceptions of quality and the harder evidence about the realities of quality is thus a daunting but necessary task (Kenny, 2006). Interestingly however, it has been observed that diverse though quality approaches may be, they tend to have the following elements in common:

- the guaranteed realisation of minimal standards and benchmarks;
- the capacity to set the objectives in a diversifying context and to achieve them with the given input and context variables;
- the ability to satisfy the demands and expectations of direct and indirect consumers and stakeholders;
- the drive towards excellence

(Vlasceanu, 2007: 73)

Even though all the five definitions of ‘quality’ are applicable to academic quality, this study adopts the ‘quality’ as “fitness for purpose” approach which measures quality by determining

whether the product or service of an institution fits its intended purpose (Harvey and Green, 1993). The ‘fitness for purpose’ definition was chosen over others because it tends to be all-encompassing. ‘Quality’ in this sense is sometimes considered as: (i) *a value for money approach* because it also implies the effective and efficient use of inputs by the processes and mechanisms involved or (ii) the *value-added approach* which evaluates results by taking into account changes obtained through various educational processes like teaching and learning. The latter, which is sometimes labeled as *the quality as transformation* approach, tends to have a strong student focus (Vlasceanu, 2007). Admittedly, the ‘fitness for purpose’ concept of quality, like others, is not watertight. For instance, it has been observed that this definition has a weakness as it may seem to imply that “anything goes” in higher education so long as a purpose can be formulated for it.” They therefore suggest that in order to ensure improvements through an evaluation that considers and challenges the comprehensiveness and relevance of purposes, there is the need to complement ‘fitness for purpose’ with ‘fitness of purpose’ (Campbell and Rozsnyai, 2001: 20). The latter focuses on the objectives and mission of the institution or programme without checking the fitness of the processes themselves as they relate to external objectives and expectations. It evaluates the adequacy of the quality-related intentions of an institution (Vlasceanu, 2007). Taking the topic of this thesis into account, the view of complementing ‘fitness for purpose’ with ‘fitness of purpose’ seems most suitable as a point of departure for exploring the assurance of quality in teaching and learning EAP at tertiary level in Ghana.

2.2.1 Rhetorical tensions and lack of consensus on QA terms

Like ‘quality’, there seem to be no consensus currently on how best to measure quality assurance within higher education institutions (Becket and Brookes, 2008; Vlasceanu et al., 2007). Two fundamental questions that naturally arise are:

- (1) What exactly is this lack of consensus about?
- (2) Why the tensions at all?

The disagreements emanate from various developments that have over the years been triggered by efforts at assessing, monitoring, and improving the quality of such vital mechanisms of higher education as its governance; teaching, learning and research as well as other services offered.

Quality assurance in HEIs therefore requires the collective efforts of all – national governments, school management, teachers, students, parents, employers and the general public. Brennan and Singh (2010) posit that QA is about power – the balance and exercise of power among four agents: governments, markets, academic ‘workers’, and academic ‘managers’ and that depending on quality and regulatory regime, quality assurance can become a tool of both attack and defence for the different agents. While the literature provides many definitions of quality assurance, in this thesis the term is understood as the processes put in place to ensure the continuous and context-specific review, evaluation and re-evaluation of institutions, their systems, and programmes against internally and/or externally agreed expectations about standards.

2.2.2 Quality assurance and enhancement in higher education

Quality assurance is based on the principle of prevention being better than a cure (Deming 1986). QA is usually considered as a means of enhancing effectiveness in higher education. It refers to systematic approaches for preventing things from going wrong in the first place, and involves the institution of appropriate mechanisms to govern production towards the desirable standard. Though a regulatory mechanism that focuses on both accountability and enhancement, it reduces the reliance on external inspectors and rather places the onus on the workforce to ensure that things are usually done right (Vlasceanu et al, 2007). This presupposes that there are laid down standards that must be conformed to, and an efficient management system in place. Quality assurance does not totally preclude the existence of inspection systems though. The concept has become so pervasive in higher educational settings of late that schools and colleges make conscious efforts to have QA systems in place for their own internal efficiency and to meet statutory requirements. This approach best depicts the QA situation Ghana, where, in addition to periodic inspections by external regulatory bodies, various HEIs have their own internal mechanisms for assuring quality. A closely related term, quality management, is about how organisations are managed to assure quality. The term encapsulates all activities that are undertaken by a higher education institution to ensure that quality policy, objectives and responsibilities are fulfilled and implemented through quality planning, quality control, quality assurance, and quality improvement mechanisms (Vlasceanu et al, 2007).

Harvey (2004-2013) defines QA as the “process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process, and outcomes) fulfils expectations and measures up to threshold

minimum requirements.” In line with that, this research took into account pre-course expectations of EAP learners’ and their actual experiences after taking the course. The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) on its part posits that:

Quality assurance may relate to a programme, an institution or a whole higher education system. In each case, quality assurance is all of those attitudes, objects, actions and procedures which, through their existence and use and together with quality control activities, ensure that appropriate academic standards are being maintained and enhanced in and by the programme, institution or system.

(INQAAHE, 1992)

These notions of quality assurance imply that QA higher education is a broad-based concept. Conducting a research of this nature thus requires that the interests and values of the different actors in HE be related to quality concepts. It is also observable that all the definitions of QA implicitly point to the making of conscious efforts at attaining some desirable standards of performance. In the process, other related concepts of quality emerge. The most frequently used concepts within the wider processes of managing quality are: ‘quality control’; ‘quality assessment’ and ‘quality audit.’ These are discussed in turn.

Quality control is often used interchangeably with quality management and quality assurance. The distinction between quality assurance and quality control has sometimes been based on the assumption that whereas the former is arguably internal to the institution, the latter can either be internal or external. Brundrett and Rhodes consider quality control as the act of detecting and eliminating components or final products that do not meet set standards, “an after-production process concerned with detecting and rejecting defective items.” Vlasceanu et al. define it as “[the] process of quality evaluation that focuses on the internal measurement of the quality of an institution or programme” (Brundrett and Rhodes, 2011: 14; Vlasceanu et al., 2007: 75). The former acknowledge the difficulty in applying it to educational settings because of the continuous nature of the teaching and learning process. Agreeing with Elis (1993), they conclude that quality control is relevant as it can lead to the adoption of more effective approaches to forestall future occurrence of deficient approaches. The latter and his colleagues see quality control as “an aggregate of actions and measures taken regularly to assure the quality of higher

education products, services, or processes, with an emphasis on the assurance that a prescribed threshold of quality is met” (Ibid.) As a filtering mechanism, it helps confirm the compliance of a higher education institution with minimal agreed-upon quality requirements, its definition by the European Student Handbook on QA, as “*the verification procedures (both formal and informal) used by institutions in order to monitor quality and standards to a satisfactory standard and as intended.*” (European Student Handbook on QA, 2002: 7)

Quality assessment refers to judging performance and outcomes using certain benchmarks as criteria. This could be either internal or external. Quality assessment is thus similar to quality control, except that the former tends to be more externally motivated than the latter. Internally, institutions may have internal QA mechanisms such as student-teacher/course appraisal, observation and peer review as part of the assessment; while the external evaluation process may consist of reviewing, measuring, and judging of the quality of higher education institutions, their programmes and services (Vlasceanu et al., 2007). In Ghana, this role is performed by the National Accreditation Board (NAB) for both programme and institutional accreditations.

Quality audit is an evaluation conducted to verify the effectiveness of the system at achieving good quality instead of quality itself (Vlasceanu et al., 2007). An external body investigates whether an institution has appropriate internal and external quality assurance mechanisms in place and whether they are functioning at all. The NAB undertakes this activity with the purpose of meeting internal goals (internal audit) or external goals (external audit), usually documenting the result in the form of an audit report.

Tools for ensuring quality in language teaching

An important component of QA in higher education is the provision of appropriate mechanisms for accessing student feedback and also ensuring that the feedback so derived is acted upon by authorities for quality enhancement. The Grundtvig Partnership (2011) in a twenty-seven-country survey identified observation, assessment, and the possession of appropriate qualifications by teachers as examples of best practices in language teaching for adults in Europe. The partnership observed that QA tools in themselves do not lead to better language teaching and learning unless they are used well. Creating a congenial learning environment and blending it with the use of quality tools is a sure way of attaining a rewarding teaching and

learning experience. Choosing from different kinds of available tools and ensuring that your choice suits your objective, and consciously involving all the major stakeholders: the learners, the teachers and the institution are also steps in the right direction.

Another important mechanism for assuring quality in language teaching is the discussion of marked scripts by teachers with their students after assessments. Nott (2013: 4) asserts that “[t]he principal purpose of marking is to provide students with feedback on their performance: marking thus stands at the sharp end, at the point of implementation, of formative assessment.” This makes the practice of marking and discussing the scripts afterwards with students an integral part of implementing quality in language teaching. It also affords both teacher and learner an opportunity for improving upon their work. As major players in the use of QA tools to enhance teaching, UNESCO aptly describes teachers as “persons whose professional activity involves the transmitting of knowledge, attitudes and skills that are stipulated in a formal curriculum or programme to students enrolled in a formal educational institution” (UNESCO, 2009: 26). In the context of this study, a “good teacher” is seen as one who skillfully blends the mastery of the course with excellent pedagogy and the right demeanour in class to deliver quality tuition for positive learning outcomes.

Conduciveness of the learning environment vis-à-vis quality of learning experience

In recent times, one key element in measuring the quality of education has been the student experience. This phenomenon, according to Tricker (2003), is ascribable to the role of students (or their parents) in contributing directly to the cost of their training. The Grundtvig Learning Partnership 2009-2011 has also stressed the need for maintaining a balance between a “conducive” learning environment and the utilisation of “quality assurance” tools. Such tools must as well be suitable (‘fit’) for the realisation of the institution’s objectives. The study also agrees with the assertion that the learning environment is not limited to the physical surroundings or milieu; it also includes “psychosocial” and “service delivery” elements that, in turn, create an enabling social climate for quality learning experience (UNICEF, 2000). The Fund further observes a strong correlation between school infrastructure and other quality dimensions like the availability of instructional material, working conditions for students and teachers and the ability of teachers to undertake certain instructional approaches which all affect the quality of teaching and learning UNICEF (2000: 7). Various other research findings equally affirm the assertion that

a positive relationship exists between the quality of the school environment and student and teacher attitudes. A classic example cited is a summary of literature review conducted for the University of Georgia by Jago and Tanner (1999) which provides some interesting conclusions by various researchers on the subject:

- Stockard and Mayberry (1992): There is a relationship between the quality of a physical plant or environment and non-cognitive outcomes like better attitudes toward school, and ultimately translate into enhanced academic achievement.
- Ferreira (1995): The state of buildings can have a direct effect on the attitudes of students, their teachers, and parents.
- Christopher (1998): “Human nature makes people feel better about themselves when their surroundings are pleasant.”

These views were supported by the UNICEF based on research findings from developing countries like India, Latin America, Botswana, Nigeria, and Papua New Guinea which all found that:

students ... whose schools lacked classroom materials and had an inadequate library were significantly more likely to show lower test scores and higher grade repetition than those whose schools were well equipped”

(Carron and Chau, 1996; Williams, 2000; Pennycuick, 1993 in UNICEF 2000: 7)

Even though some of the studies were conducted in pre-tertiary educational environments, it is obvious that most of the findings also hold true for adult learners and are therefore relevant to the context of this study. After this broad overview of the quality situation, it should be worthwhile examining the QA phenomenon in Africa; its challenges and prospects to Ghanaian higher education in general, and to language education in particular.

2.2.3 Quality assurance issues in Sub-Saharan Africa

Quality assurance is said to be as old as higher education itself; however, in most African countries structured QA process in higher education at the national level is a recent development. Most national QA agencies, according to Materu (2007), were set up in the last decade and are therefore fairly young. As recently as 2007, only 16 out of 52 countries in sub-Saharan Africa had national quality assurance agencies. Ghana’s National Accreditation Board (NAB), for

instance, was set up in 1993 to oversee quality assurance in both public and private tertiary institutions, but it was only in 2007 that Act 744 was enacted granting it the necessary legal mandate (Government of Ghana, 2007) for its operations.

QA agencies, rather than ensuring accountability or improving quality, were created mainly to regulate the development and provision of higher education, especially by the private sector (Mohamedbhai, 2011; Materu, 2007). This situation is however changing very fast as a result of both internal and external factors. Externally, the increased recognition of higher education by African nations as a ‘driver of growth’ as well as a vital tool for the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is a contributory factor. With the advent of the World Trade Organisation’s (WTO) General Agreements on Trade in Services (GATS) too, new types of higher education providers have emerged. In many African countries the establishment, funding and management of tertiary education had been the sole preserve of African governments. While some of these public institutions were set up by colonial governments, the majority were established after independence by acts of parliament. The economic woes that began in the 1970s led many African governments to deregulate the tertiary education sector “by promulgating laws that empower non-governmental entities to establish and operate tertiary education institutions” (Ekhuere, 2010: 377). In Ghana, the past decade witnessed the mushrooming of private tertiary education institutions. Between the 1999/2000 and 2005/2006 academic years, for instance, the number of private universities rose from two to 13, with student enrollment rising by more than one thousand percent (Effah and Senadza, 2008: 213). It was because of the emergence of these institutions and the need to regulate their activities that formal QA agencies in most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa were established (Ibid). Articles 12 and 13 of the National Accreditation Act 744, 2007 state that,

12. The President shall grant a charter to private tertiary institution to enable the institution issue certificates, diplomas or degrees.
13. A foreign tertiary institution that seeks to operate in Ghana shall apply to the Board to be registered

(Government of Ghana, 2007)

This was appropriate action taken at the right time to forestall further decadence of the quality of higher education because, as Ekhuere (2010: 378) rightly observes, “the courses offered ... in Africa by many providers of transnational education are sometimes inferior versions of analogous courses offered to their home students” and that the courses do not seem to take into account “African perspectives, aspirations, and goals in their formulation and delivery.” Internally, the need for HEIs themselves to meet their ambitious strategic goals of becoming ‘centres of excellence’ capable of competing with their peers locally and internationally, as well as pressure from governments and other stakeholders for accountability have also contributed to increased action on QA systems at the institutional level.

The increased impact of international standards brought about by globalisation means competition of graduates locally and internationally. Thus, the need has arisen for African higher education authorities to ensure that the relevant mechanisms are put in place to confront the realities of the times. In the public sector, rapid growth of tertiary enrollment without the corresponding increase in funding poses a threat for compromising the quality of higher education. All over Africa today, quality assurance issues have become very crucial because of the adverse effect of harsh economic and political factors on institutions of learning. In the wake of intense brain drain, assuring quality in higher education could be a panacea for the retention of skilled human capital in Africa (Materu, 2007). By assuring quality too, the process of harmonisation which is fast catching on in Africa will be facilitated. The Association of African Universities (AAU), the World Bank and UNESCO have all corroborated the fact that knowledge is the only means by which developing countries can narrow the income gap between them and the developed world (AAU, 2010). A UNESCO-commissioned task force on higher education in Africa has, for instance, observed that the quality of knowledge generated within higher education institutions and its availability to the wider economy is assuming a critical role in national competitiveness. However, higher education in Ghana, like in many other African countries, has suffered some relative neglect and stagnation for a long time. Research has also shown that relatively few students acquire the relevant knowledge and skills before they get to the secondary and tertiary levels. “This poor elementary performance,” according to the Education Strategic Plan, “flows upward through the system, creating weak performance at higher levels” (Government of Ghana, 2007: 17). As a result, there has been a decline in the quality of higher education in general in the country.

As part of efforts to revitalize the sector, various reform measures have been introduced, the most recent being the new education reform policy launched in 2007 (Government of Ghana, 2007) and the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2003 - 2015. Goal 2 of the ESP for instance aims to: “improve the quality of teaching and learning for enhanced pupil/student achievement” (Government of Ghana, 2003: 14). The AAU, also in a bid to empower African higher education institutions to contribute meaningfully to the global education enterprise and the world of work, is promoting the establishment of national and regional quality assurance systems on the continent (AAU, 2010). One question that remains is, “What are the major needs of African higher education?” First, there is the need for African higher education institutions to be aware of new trends on the global quality assurance scene so as to enable them not only contribute, but also participate in and benefit from new quality assurance policies. One of the main challenges of quality assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa being weak capacity for self-assessment, the development of home-grown capacity and quality evaluation and accreditation systems will be a step in the right direction for solving local and regional challenges. Along with national and regional efforts, there will also be the need for institutions to promote their own quality assurance capabilities (Oyewole, 2007). This phenomenon, it must be acknowledged is not unique to Africa, as similar processes and developments have been occurring in many other parts of the world.

Challenges of quality assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa

Quality assurance in sub-Saharan African is saddled with many challenges. The main ones are: dearth of adequately trained professional staff in the national quality assurance agencies, lack of knowledge about the related process among the staff in the institutions, resistance from faculty to get fully engaged in the process of data collection and analysis because it is very time-consuming, and lack of funds to establish quality assurance systems in the institutions (Mohamedbhai, 2011; Materu, 2007). Because national QA bodies depend on government funding and approval of most of their decisions, it is feared that their independence can be compromised (Materu, 2007). Sensitisation, capacity building, and funding are, thus, the main issues that need to be addressed in promoting quality assurance. In Ghana, for instance, inadequate funding and staffing account for the NAB’s inability to effectively monitor and ‘flush out’ unaccredited institutions operating in the country. These institutions have adopted very

aggressive approaches in their advertising in both the print and electronic media, making it difficult or even impossible for the NAB to counter-advertise against them. A cheaper option could be issuing rejoinders; but that is also difficult because some media houses only accept paid advertisements, a situation the Executive Secretary of the NAB describes as presenting “a major difficulty” to the Board (Daily Graphic, 2011).

2.3 Privatisation and Quality Assurance in Ghana

Privatisation constitutes a very important trend not just in higher education, but also in quality assurance. A discussion of QA issues in higher education in Ghana would undoubtedly be incomplete without reference to the unique and interesting role of the privates in QA in that sector. It is believed that the establishment of formal QA agencies in most Sub-Saharan African countries like Ghana was engendered by the advent of the private HEIs and the need to regulate their activities (Effah and Senadza, 2008: 213). This section examines the trend with a view to identifying any possible implications for QA and the quality of EAP.

First, what is private higher education? A review of the literature on private higher education indicates the absence of a universal definition of the term. This is because of the several interpretations that it is subject to. Jones (1992), for instance, identifies private higher education by the fees charged, business behaviour, philanthropy, or increase of private institutions (Jones, 1992 in Effah, 2006). Other determining factors cited include autonomy and funding sources. Situations in other parts of the world make finding a universal definition even more difficult. Like in India, private HEIs in Ghana are affiliated to public universities. Such affiliations are, according to the National Accreditation Board, meant:

to ensure the attainment and maintenance of high standards for the promotion of academic quality. The relationship is for the mentoring institution to provide academic support and supervision to the mentored institution (NAB, 2010: 2).

This means that not until the attainment of autonomy, the culture of private universities like CUCG and IUCG would largely be influenced by the culture and quality regimes of their mentoring universities. In spite of this, one still expects to find certain distinctive values of the university, as culture in a typical academic context encompasses all those values that distinguish an educational institution from others. A cross-case study of these distinctions between the

public and private HEIs in Ghana would be conducted later in Chapter 5 of this thesis to examine the extent to which their respective QA practices impact the quality of EAP.

In countries like Belgium and the Netherlands for instance, where welfare-state conditions exist, private universities receive full state funding. This is not the case in the Ghanaian educational landscape.

In Ghana, the issue of state funding for private tertiary educational institutions has become a huge debate in recent times with many demanding that the privates also benefit from Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) sponsored projects because of their vital complementary role of supplementing the efforts of the public ones in meeting the high demand for tertiary education. Under the Education Sector Development Project (EdSep), Private universities with a minimum of 3 years accreditation from the National Accreditation Board were eligible to annually access 2 percent of an amount of US\$33.4 million from the World Bank/Government of Ghana's Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF). The fund which was disbursed through competitive proposal writing ended in October 2011. Also, students pursuing accredited programmes in private tertiary institutions qualify to take student loans formerly disbursed through the Social Security and National Insurance Trust and currently under the Students Loan Trust Fund. Altbach (2005) attests that private higher education has since the last quarter of the 20th century suddenly become the fastest-growing sector of global higher education. He ascribes the difficulty of generalisation about the sector to the wide spectrum of institutions internationally. The lack of ownership or regulation by the state has also been cited as another variation (Effah, 2006). Citing Patillo, Effah suggests that rather than use the source of funding to distinguish private institutions from public ones, the structure and operation of governing boards of institutions should be used as the benchmark. Thus the term, 'privately-controlled' has gained currency in the expression of the private-public dichotomy (Patillo, 1990 in Effah, 2006). Contributing to the public-private debate, Geiger (1988) observes that the dichotomy between public and private institutions is usually employed for purposes of record keeping, general discourse, and sometimes scholarly analysis. He rightly notes that ironically,

this simple dichotomy obscures a profoundly important subject: while public sectors can be regarded, directly or indirectly, as creatures of the state, the state also to a considerable

extent molds the conditions of existence for privately controlled institutions. The state is thus a powerful factor on both sides of the divide.

(Geiger, 1988: 700)

In spite of the apparent lack of consensus on what really constitutes a private higher education sector, their roles in QA and supplementing the efforts of public HEIs in providing education cannot be overemphasized as public-funded institutions alone can never meet the huge demand for higher education. A significant number of private and cross-border higher education institutions already operate in Africa. Even though private institutions were arguably among the first (in terms of date of establishment and quality) in Africa, today they seem to have been overshadowed by the public ones. This situation makes private higher education in Africa seem a new phenomenon, when really it is not. Mabizela (2007) considers what many may term “the private surge” as rather “a resurgence”, arguing that “antecedents of private higher education existed at the same time as the establishment of public sector institutions or even before in some instances” (Mabizela, 2007: 15). Mabizela posits, and rightly so, that “it will be appropriate to talk about the resurgence of PHEIs in some countries and a surge in others.” (p. 17).

In Ghana, there are over 60 private higher education institutions, with membership of the Association of Vice Chancellors of Private Universities currently standing at 25. There are yet more accredited private tertiary education institutions to be members of the association. At a recent interaction with journalists, Kwame Dattey, Executive Secretary of the National Accreditation Board stated that the law establishing the NAB did not limit the number of tertiary educational institutions to be given accreditation, hence their proliferation (Daily Graphic, 2011). Majority of these institutions are affiliated to local public ones, with a few having affiliations abroad. Currently only one private university, the Valley View University, a faith-based HEI, has received presidential charter to award its own degrees and diplomas. Like in many African countries, the role of the church in the provision of higher education cannot be overemphasized. Over 10 of the private higher educational institutions in Ghana now are faith-based. Interestingly, besides the mainline churches like the Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian, the Pentecostals and Charismatics have also joined the surge. Examples are the Pentecost University (owned by the Church of Pentecost), and the Central University College (by the International Central Gospel Church). There is only one Islamic University in the country

now. It was established by the Republic of Iran, and is included in the case sites. As regards the public sector, there are only eight public universities and ten polytechnics. The existence of the eight public universities, the ten polytechnics, and the apparent proliferation of private institutions notwithstanding, demand for tertiary education is still high in Ghana and has outstripped available academic facilities. As a result, the University of Cape Coast for instance had to cut down its student intake for the 2011/2012 academic year by 12 percent. Private higher education providers should therefore be encouraged, as they can be beneficial in many ways, especially in helping solve the access problem. However, since many of them are profit-motivated and occasionally accused of offering poor quality education, they need to be regulated and their quality controlled (Mohamedbhai, 2011). In the next section, the relative standing of the privates is discussed with a view to identifying contextual features that may have implications for QA. This would be followed by a cross-case analysis of the differences between public and private HEIs and how their QA mechanisms affect the quality of EAP later in Chapter 5.

2.3.1 Relative standing of the privates in Ghana

In Ghana, public tertiary institutions enjoy more public repute than their private counterparts. While public-funded institutions are usually considered the ultimate choice of most senior high school leavers, the private ones often tend to be ‘the last resort.’ The reasons are not farfetched: Whereas the public ones are better positioned in terms of both human and other relevant academic resources and still enjoy their long-won academic glories; most of the privates are comparatively young and not well endowed and sometimes depend on the public ones for lecturers. Many privates have also been accused of using unqualified academic staff. This was confirmed recently by the Executive Secretary of the National Accreditation Board, Kwame Dattey when he disclosed that the NAB had found out that some private tertiary education institutions in Ghana were operating with unqualified lecturers and staff, while others admitted students without passes in the requisite core subjects (Daily Graphic, 2011). According to him, in one university college a NAB commissioned quality audit team discovered that 22 students who were about to graduate had not met the qualification requirements. As he did not name any particular private university, many members of the Ghanaian public suggested that in future such offending institutions should be named and shamed. While Vice Chancellors of public universities complain of dwindling state funding in the face of increased demand for tertiary

education, and thus call on government to allow them to charge “realistic fees”; the private for-profit ones have the liberty to do so. Currently, government policy only allows public universities a 5 percent foreign student quota and additional 5 percent quota for Ghanaian-sponsored fee-paying students (Effah, 2006). For some time now, the NCTE-approved annual fee increment ceiling for publicly-funded tertiary institutions has been 10 percent. A recent 33 to 54 percent increase in academic facility user fees (AFUF) by authorities of the University of Ghana, Legon led to student demonstrations at the beginning of the 2011/2012 academic year (GNA, 2011). One thing though, that makes private tertiary institutions more attractive than their public counterparts is the flexibility of their course offering and timetabling (Effah, 2006). For instance, a number of the privates offer ICT, Marketing, Banking, and Finance – courses which are currently considered more demand-driven. Also, the running of courses in the morning, afternoon, evening, and weekends by private institutions like the Data Link College and NIIT for instance affords workers who want to further their studies there the opportunity of choosing which sessions suit them best (Ibid.). The public universities still follow their conventional time-tables, but have become more aggressive in running sandwich and distance programmes.

In the next three subsections, an overview of the application of quality to language education is provided to help establish the relevant background for exploring the effectiveness of these QA mechanisms in enhancing the teaching and learning of EAP.

2.4 Applying Quality Assurance in Language Teaching and Learning

As far as theories on teaching and learning are concerned, a potential tension worth considering is that despite the considerably large volume of literature on teaching and learning in HE (e.g. Biggs and Tang, 2007; Fry et al, 2003; Fox, 1983; Entwistle and Saljo, 1976), it hardly relates to the quality literature. Most of the theories are rather pedagogic in nature. For instance, among Fox’s four personal theories of teaching, only one – “the shaping theory” (which treats teaching as a transformational process that shapes or molds students into a pattern that is already determined, i.e. “fit for the intended purpose”) could be said to be related to quality. The assertion of Biggs and Tang that “[h]ow effectively we teach depends, first, on what we think teaching is” has a bearing on quality (Biggs and Tang, 2007: 15). Every teacher, they believe, has some personal theory of what teaching is, just like quality which, like ‘beauty, dwells in the

eye of the beholder'. Their "blame model" integrates learning and teaching and sees "effective teaching as encouraging students to use the learning activities most likely to lead to the achievement of intended outcomes" (Ibid.). This fits into the quality debate because it falls in line with the definition of quality assurance as "fitness of purpose" and the supporting of appropriate student learning activities and discouraging of inappropriate ones as "fitness for purpose." As far as language teaching and learning are concerned, Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Brown (2007) provide some valuable approaches and principles, but even so, they do not also seem to have a direct bearing on the quality literature. This situation might have arisen because QA has sometimes been regarded as just creating a "compliance culture" with little or no relationship to actual processes of teaching and learning. However, this stance is debatable because both teaching and learning have strict compliance regimes that must be followed in matters relating to curriculum content; assessment and appraisal; deadlines; provisions of statutes; strategic plans; students' handbooks and professional code of ethics, which are all meant for assuring quality. On the teaching side, quality may well be referenced against subject standards [and benchmarks] rather than pedagogic theories. For instance, EAP programmes are designed to equip students who are undergoing training through the medium of English with the requisite (i.e. standard) language and related skills. Like QA, which is context-specific, EAP courses take "studying in context" into account through the identification of the social as well as academic requirements of a particular situation and thus equip students to cope (Robinson, 1991).

2.4.1 Pedagogical paradigms and language teaching

There has been a considerable volume of debate on which pedagogical paradigm yields the best results and leads to a more rewarding learner experience: a teacher-centred approach or a learner-centred classroom instruction? While some scholars argue that the two are not entirely different in the sense that they both aim at a common outcome of ensuring that students do what they are supposed to do – learning; others contend that it is not just about outcomes, but rather process: how teaching/learning is done (Blumberg, 2008; Weimer, 2002; Conti, 1979). A teaching style that is student-centred tends to engage students in the learning process whilst a teacher-centred approach mostly aims at transmitting information. This therefore suggests that a teacher-centred teaching may be limited in its engagement of learners during the learning process. In recent times, a "learner-centred" approach to tertiary-level education has been advocated by many

including Weimer (2002) and Blumberg (2008). As far as language teaching is concerned, Hart (2003:228) advocates that “language learners should develop their understanding of the convention of language used by engaging in the kinds of language activity found in real life rather than by learning a list of rules.” Paradoxically, results from a recent survey by Liu et al. (2006) in south-western universities of the US showed that in spite of the apparently dominant position of the learner-centred approach in adult education literature, in practice, there is still a very high reliance on the teacher-centred approach in university settings. Currently in Ghanaian HE environments, the most widely-used instructional approach has been the teacher-centred. Recent attempts aimed at shifting to a learner-centred paradigm saw the introduction of competency-based learning (CBL) to the teaching of some selected courses in some tertiary institutions, especially the polytechnics. In the face of the tensions relating to a better pedagogical paradigm to adult education, this author shares the view of McCollin (2000) that factors such as the personalities of the learner and the teacher; the learning situation, and curriculum content all contribute to determining the teaching style.

2.4.2 Why apply QA procedures in language education

Like any field of endeavour, language education must meet the expectations of its stakeholders – learners, parents, employers, the government and society at large. It is therefore essential that relevant standards and criteria are set for assessing the quality of teaching and learning activities. As Heyworth puts it, “in the field of language education there is the need to have a clear and coherent idea of what are “the right things” that we are doing, and procedures for checking that we are “doing things right” ” (Heyworth, 2011: 2). Ghana is a multi-lingual country with English as her official language and the main language of politics and law. For the majority of students, English is their L2. EAP is taught in almost all tertiary educational institutions in the country, but unlike in other countries, the reason for its teaching goes beyond just equipping students with the requisite competences in academic English to helping improve upon their general performance in English, which is considered ‘abysmal’ for most students. The language policy of education in Ghana, though developed with good intentions, has been blamed for this unfortunate situation partly because of its ‘checkered history’ and partly due to lapses in implementation. The acknowledgement by researchers like Baker (2000) and Lewelling (1991) that the level of first language proficiency can impact positively on second language development and cognitive and

academic achievement has been the basis for the policy recommending the use of Ghanaian languages as media of instruction in lower primary (i.e. primary one to three). However, since 1525 there has not been a consistent language policy. While some governments have continued with the full implementation of the policy; others have discontinued it, and rather subscribed to the use of English only in teaching at all levels (Owu-Ewie, 2006). For instance, in 2002 a law was promulgated mandating the use of English language as the medium of instruction from primary one. Owu-Ewie (2006) observes that the problem is not with the policy but its implementation, pointing out that the teachers and learners have not been provided with the needed resources to teach the English language. The mere use of a child's L1 at the lower primary level, he argues, does not guarantee achievement in English language. Citing Carroll (1962), he notes that for a programme to ensure success in L2, it must provide quality instruction and enough opportunities for learning the language, including adequate time. He laments that "as a nation, we have not trained teachers to teach English as a foreign language in a meaningful way and use it for academic purposes in a way that could lead to maximum returns" (Owu-Ewie, 2006:79).

As the application of QA procedures to teaching in general, and to language teaching in particular in Ghana are examined, it is appropriate to take into account the language teaching field of Europe, the origin of the English language, so as to determine how far it can (or cannot) be usefully applied locally. Three documents: The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (2001), the QAA's Benchmark Statement on Language and Related Studies (2007) and the European Language Learning Materials Study: Examples of Good Practice (2000) provide some useful guidelines. First, a brief discussion of the CEFR and its role in enhancing the quality of L2 teaching and learning:

2.5 The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages

The CEFR "provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc." (Council of Europe, 2001). It evolved as a result of the several issues that emerge when trying to describe levels of language learning, teaching and assessment. In different institutions and among different countries, levels can mean different things. The CEFR's "Global Scale" which ranges from A1 to C2 thus serves as common reference levels. It describes what a learner can do at six specific levels A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and

C2. A1 and A2 are for the basic user; B1 and B2 for the independent user, and C1 and C2 for the proficient user. These levels match general competency concepts of basic, intermediate, and advanced. Common reference levels are based on a set of “can do” statements describing what a learner is capable of, not what he/she cannot do or does wrong. The CEFR describes

- Competencies necessary for effective communication.
- Skills and knowledge related to language learning and competencies.
- Situations (people, place, time, organisation, etc.) and contexts (study, work, social, tourism, etc.) in which communication takes place.

(CEF, 2001 in Pearson Longman 2007: 4).

On the relevance of the CEFR in this study, two questions are worth considering:

1. Why should a framework termed “European” be worthy of consideration in a study conducted outside Europe?
2. What is the role of the CEFR in contributing to definition of the object of this study?

First, it should be noted that the word “*European*” in the Common European Framework does not imply that the framework is meant for persons studying or teaching in Europe alone; neither is it a political or cultural tool intended for the promotion of Europe or European educational systems (Pearson Longman, 2007). Instead, the term refers to European languages, one of which is English, the unit of analysis in this thesis. Furthermore, the CEFR is not a methodology and so does not prescribe a way of teaching. Rather, it serves as a descriptive framework for all language levels, affording language teachers a leeway to achieve new levels of proficiency using a methodology they deem convenient (Pearson Longman, 2007: 6). This makes the CEFR appropriate for and adaptable to language teaching research in Ghana as well.

Second, the object of this study being to explore the application of QA principles in the teaching and learning of EAP at tertiary level in Ghana, the CEFR is worth referring to. As a language programme, EAP aims at equipping tertiary students with relevant competencies for effective academic communication and also prepare them for the world of work. Placing this in the quality context, the Global Scale of the CEFR can be said to have been tailored after the ‘zero defect’ concept of quality. Helping learners see the value of learning and how attainable their language goals are, also make the scale fit in the ‘value for money’ concept of quality. Also, the CEFR’s

capacity of linking curriculum, pedagogy and assessment more closely than before, makes it what has been described as “the single most innovative feature of the CEF” (Little, 2011: 382). According to Little,

“this capacity arises from its action-oriented approach to the description of L2 proficiency. Each “can do” descriptor may be used to specify a learning target, select and/or develop learning activities and materials, and shape the design of assessment tasks” (Ibid.)

Thus, as far as the contribution of the CEFR to defining the object of this study is concerned, the following conclusions could be drawn: i) It might be used to construct the EAP curriculum as the quote from Little 2011 rightly infers; ii) It might be used as a scale (indicator) to measure proficiency levels of students after the EAP course (see Section 2.5.1), and iii) If a test were made and scored in CEF terms also before the course, a measure of value-added might be made. These contributions notwithstanding, there is need to consider the following pertinent questions:

- a) Does CEFR really measure EAP-proficiency? (If this is a measure that has validity)
- b) Does it measure all of EAP-proficiency?

It is noteworthy that the CEFR does not really measure EAP-proficiency, but rather provides a “self-assessment” grid by which learners can measure their own competencies in all the basic communicative skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking. By the same grid, EAP teachers can also assess the proficiency of their students in the course. The CEFR was designed to provide common standards for the establishing of goals and determining achievement. Besides stating values to be considered in the design and approach to curriculum development, it also provides the needed conceptual framework for language teaching, learning and assessment. As a framework that does not prescribe a way of teaching, the CEFR cannot be said to be a methodology. It only provides a descriptive framework for all language levels; affording language teachers a leeway to achieve new levels of proficiency using a methodology they deem convenient (Pearson Longman, 2007: 6).

In defining client needs, the introduction of the CEFR poses the following questions as the basis to consider in need analysis:

- What will they need to do with the language?
- What will they need to learn in order to do what they want?
- What makes them want to learn?
- What sort of people are they?
- What knowledge, skill and experiences do their teachers possess?
- What access do they have to resources?
- How much time can they afford to spend?

(Council of Europe, 2001: 4)

Since the teaching content of EAP is prepared in such a way that it matches the learner's requirements (see 2.1), it meant that the above needs were taken into account the design of the EAP curricula of the case institutions. Thus, although none of case institutions specifically cited the CEFR, it is evident that the quality standards spelt out in the framework are not absent in their contexts. To ensure that the processes, procedures, and resources at the case study institutions are fit for assuring the quality of the EAP programme it would be important to juxtapose their various course objectives with the Global Scale of the CEFR so as to assess actual student communicative abilities at the end of the EAP course.

2.5.1 The Quality Guide

In preparing the Benchmark Statement on Language and Related Studies (2007), the QAA also adapted the CEF and other significant standards-related documents. The benchmark statement is “intended to make explicit, to subject community and other stakeholders, the academic qualities and competences that could be expected of graduates in the subject area” (QAA, 2007: iv). As a document that supports higher educational institutions in their pursuit of standards and internal quality assurance, the benchmark statement lends itself for reference in this study.

The quality criteria provided in the Socrates/Leonardo project “A Quality Guide for the Evaluation and Design of Language Learning and Teaching Programmes and Materials” (European Commission, 2000) exemplify good practice in language learning and will be adopted in this study. Using the “Quality Guide” as a basis, Lasnier et al. evaluated learning materials for 11 European languages and identified the following as characteristics of good practice which also hold true for EAP as a subject, in that:

- they correspond to the objectives and needs of the target group;
- their contents and form are motivating and facilitate access and use for learners and/or teachers;
- they can easily be adjusted to the changing needs of the target group;
- the approach used is appropriate to and consistent with the objectives declared and encourages the transfer of the learned competences to different contexts;
- non-linguistic aspects such as social and intercultural competences are also included.

(Lasnier et al., 2000)

Quality criteria are considered by the “Quality Guide” as “broad super-ordinate notions that have been developed by relating widely used concepts of quality in general to current modern language learning and teaching theories” (Lasnier et al., 2000:3). Considering the complexity of the subject, reducing it to ‘a single simplistic model of quality’ will be unrealistic. Thus, in order to attain high standards, there will be the need to set criteria for judging the quality of teaching and learning.

Language teaching and learning have been identified as complex matters, as they involve the personalities of teachers and students as well as the relationships between them. This makes exploring the application of quality assurance principles in language education an equally complicated task. Nonetheless, the attainment of high standards in the discipline is achievable if the assessment of language education is modeled upon the principles of customer satisfaction, efficient process management, evaluation of results, human resource focus, and sound educational principles (Heyworth, 2011). This implies that a successful application of quality concepts in ascertaining the efficiency of language education programme and materials will require the input of both external and internal players to ensure a balanced judgment.

2.6 Emic and Etic Dimensions of Effectiveness

Little information is available in the public domain on the effectiveness of QA mechanisms in EAP (Afful, 2007; Materu, 2007; Gillet and Wray, 2010). They acknowledge the existence of much published information on target need assessment in EAP, but attest that mention is not made of the extent to which EAP programmes contribute to the success of students in their chosen academic fields (Gillet and Wray 2010). It is therefore important that this is taken into account in this study. Measuring the effectiveness of a language programme has both ‘emic’ and

‘etic’ dimensions because, as Pike (1954) observes, in studying the cultural system of a given society, the analyst may take the point of view of either the insider or the outsider. Pike also defines the “etic” approach as one that examines the extrinsic concepts and categories meaningful to scientific observers. It thus implies objective or outsider account. Only scientists can judge the validity of an ‘etic’ account, just as only linguists can judge the accuracy of a phonetic transcription. The “emic” focuses on cultural distinctions meaningful to members of a given society. For example, how the cultures of the four case institutions in the study enhance quality EAP teaching and learning. Just like in language, only the native speakers can judge the accuracy of a phonemic identification, only the native members of a culture, in this case, students, lecturers, and administrators of the four study sites can judge the validity of an ‘emic’ description of the application of QA principles in language education in their various contexts. As Rose (2007) rightly observes, “[m]aking commitment to quality starts with a vision, a shared commitment; a public statement [that] provides the focus and energy for the organisation [and] expresses the organisation’s value” (Rose, 2007:25).

2.7 Conclusion

Although quality and QA have been acknowledged as indispensable in teaching and learning, ironically there seem to be no consensus on what these terms really are. Varied opinions have been expressed on the concepts despite their acknowledged importance and long history in higher education. While the literature provides many definitions of ‘quality’, the “fitness for purpose” idea is adopted as a point of departure in this thesis. Indeed, fitness for purpose may not automatically lead to quality enhancement, but focusing on it is deemed appropriate because if the quality of EAP teaching is assured and made fit for the purpose for which it is taught/learnt, then quality enhancement is achievable.

The inseparability of the concept of ‘quality’ from “QA” has also been acknowledged. Though the focus of this thesis has been on the latter and how its principles impact on the quality of teaching and learning of EAP, it was deemed necessary to discuss the former as well. Whereas “quality” is considered in this thesis as that inherent attribute of a person, an organisation, a product or a service that makes it better or worse than others of its kind and has the potential of amelioration; “quality assurance” is understood as the continuous and context-specific review, evaluation and re-evaluation of institutions, their systems, and programmes against internally and/or externally agreed expectations about standards. As far as higher education is concerned,

QA is an all-encompassing activity involving an institution; its programmes and systems as well as its human resource. QA encapsulates the processes, procedures, and policies aimed at enhancing quality. ‘Quality’ then is a product of QA.

This review also reveals that even though there is some literature on QA in higher education in Ghana and Africa, there seem to be none specifically on the teaching and learning of EAP – the unit of analysis in this study. Similarly, information on quality assurance in private tertiary education institutions in Ghana is rather sparse. It is therefore hoped that by doing a cross-case analysis of the differences between private and public HEIs, this study would help highlight issues pertaining to a hitherto “unresearched” area and also make some more insight to what already exists on managing QA in teaching and learning in Sub-Saharan Africa. Considering its central role in assuring quality in L2 education, the Common European Framework of Reference was also discussed. As the study involves curricular, pedagogical and assessment issues in EAP, the CEFR was considered crucial in this review as these issues constitute its principal features. It was observed that the framework might be used to construct the curriculum; used as an indicator to measure proficiency levels of students after the EAP course (Section 2.5.1); or might be used in making a measure of value-addition.

Overall, this study is not intended to come out with a set of prescriptions, but to propose from the broad quality principles outlined in this review, standards and criteria that would suit EAP education in a multilingual context like Ghana’s. The study is thus an attempt to identify which conditions or strategies in Ghanaian HEIs would contribute to the quality of EAP, and to examine why or how assuring the quality of EAP can lead to higher-quality learning of English among students.

Chapter 3 Research Methods

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology that was adopted to facilitate the process of examining the chosen area of study: first, exploring the application of quality assurance principles in teaching and learning in Ghana and second, and more specifically, measuring the extent to which student expectation about the quality of teaching and learning English for Academic Purposes (EAP) at tertiary level has been met. Following the review of available literature on national and international policies on quality assurance in higher education, privatisation, subject benchmarks for languages, and the case institutions' own QA systems in Chapter 2, the definition of quality as “fitness for purpose” was adopted in designing the approach to the study. The research questions that were generated in order to achieve the objectives of this study are revisited in this chapter as a prelude to the approach employed in this study. Methods used in collecting and analysing data received are also explained in this chapter. The chapter concludes with a description of how ontological, epistemological, ethical, and confidential issues were dealt with. It also outlines some limitations of the study. This is done with a view to providing some relevant background for the discussion of research findings subsequently in Chapter 4.

3.1 Background Considerations

The object of this research is to explore the application of quality assurances strategies in the teaching and learning of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) at tertiary level in Ghana. The study is aimed at analysing relevant factors on the quality of teaching and learning in general and EAP in particular with a view to contributing to the quality debate and through the research findings, offer some suggestions for enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning EAP in a multilingual context like Ghana's. As a means of soliciting relevant unstructured data from key survey participants: students, lecturers, and administrators for a better appreciation of the local QA phenomenon, the study adopted qualitative tools. However, given the varied contexts of case institutions like the public/private divide, different missions, visions and foci, the study also took some quantitative dimensions. Combining the two methods in this study also lends credence to the assertion that each of them has its own place and strengths in research. Rationales for the choice of tools and approaches employed in this study would be discussed in turns later in this chapter.

3.2 Methods and Methodology

Research methodology for evaluating language programmes has been classified into different paradigms by various scholars. The positivistic/quantitative approach and the naturalistic/qualitative approaches are generally favoured by applied linguists and language programme evaluators as the most ideal language programme evaluation tools (Thanh Vhan 2008:1; Lynch 1996). To measure the effects of different methods on the success of English language programmes at the case study institutions, a positivistic design was considered most appropriate for this study. With most of the data for a naturalistic research design coming from a variety of sources such as students, instructors, administrators, evaluators, and other stakeholders, Lynch (1996) identifies observation, interviews, journals, questionnaires, and document analysis as the most common methods for gathering and recording data.

As a study that seeks to explore quality assurance in the teaching and learning of EAP in higher education, a combination of both positivistic and naturalistic designs was adopted. With the main objective of research being “finding something out” (Newby 2010), Education research, to which category this research area belongs, seeks to explore issues in education in order to identify and specify a problem that can or should be the subject of further research. It can however be argued that just finding something out and doing nothing about it is not a worthwhile venture. After finding out what went well or wrong, it is important that suggestions are made not only to enhance what went well; but also to correct what went wrong. Information collected in this research would be made available for use in the case study sites for making judgements that can inform policy direction. By finding out how quality is assured in the teaching of the EAP programme in the four selected higher educational institutions, findings and recommendations could be shared for the achievement of quality enhancement in Ghana. Research also makes it possible to assess current performance and to determine whether something can be done better than the way it is already being done. To attain these broad objectives, education research adopts three common approaches: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods, all of which have been adopted in this study and would be considered in turns later in this chapter.

3.2.1 Distinguishing between “research methodology” and “research methods”

Newby (2010) stresses the need to draw a line between the terms ‘research methodology’ and ‘research methods’. He argues that the literature on the practice of conducting research identifies three categories of authors:

- those who use the terms *research methods* and *research methodology* very precisely with different meanings;
- those who see little distinction between the two terms and use predominantly one or the other to mean what the first group refers to as research methods; and
- those who are ‘flexible’ in their use of the terms and use them interchangeably.

(Newby 2010: 49)

The two, in his view, are quite distinct and should therefore be used in different ways. He defines the two ideas as:

- *research methodology* is concerned with the assembly of research tools and the application of appropriate research rules;
- *research methods* are the research tools themselves, e.g. questionnaires, observation, statistical analysis (Ibid.).

In other words, methods are a subset of methodology, as the latter “is how the toolkit of research methods is brought together to crack an individual and specific research problem” (Ibid). The choice of a particular method is usually determined by the type of data the researcher anticipates as needful in their attempt to find answers to the research question. As a research that is intended to explore the quality assurance systems for teaching and learning of EAP in four Ghanaian tertiary institutions, the data included both qualitative and quantitative ones. A qualitative, comparative case study was thus selected as the research design for a greater part of the study, using “expert-driven; maximum variation; criterion-based techniques” as sampling methods (Childress, 2010). As an approach that is not limited by variables or options, the qualitative method facilitated the investigation and understanding of situations and events in varied tertiary educational environments in Ghana. For purposes of categorising the subject institutions into groups for analysis, a quantitative approach was also used. This approach helped in distinguishing between public and private and universities and colleges, the kind of courses they

concentrate on, and in exploring their quality assurance mechanisms. Subject lecturers and administrators were also involved in the survey. In order to explore the effectiveness of the EAP course in the various institutions, students at entry and exit points were involved in the survey.

3.2.2 The research problem

The research seeks to address the question: How are quality assurance principles being applied to teaching and learning of EAP in Ghana? To better appreciate the problem, this study focuses on measuring the extent to which learner expectations in EAP teaching and learning in the public and private sectors of Ghanaian higher education are being met and how their experiences can be enhanced. Using two institutions from each sector, the study examines their existing quality assurance mechanisms; tools being used and those they should use. It also considers what things are being done differently or in the same way in the four institutions. These issues were found to be ideally suited to the case study methodology, hence its adoption in this research. Currently, there are eight public and over 60 private universities in Ghana with 10 public polytechnics strategically located in each regional capital. The choice of the four case institutions was purely on grounds of expedience to arrive at research data that was manageable within the timeframe of this study. The study does not seek to come out with new QA principles or theories; as there is already so much that the confusion so engendered is unimaginable. The magnitude of attempting a survey to measure the application of QA to all disciplines offered by these institutions also determined the settlement on EAP as the unit of analysis in this study.

3.2.3 Design of the study

The study had a quality in education focus and was undertaken from an applied linguistics perspective. As a field of study, the appropriateness of applied linguistics in academic undertakings of this nature is aptly summed up in these words of Howatt's:

[I]f there is one single source which has been responsible for stimulating innovation and activity [in language teaching], it is (in one or other of its various guises) applied linguistics. It has not performed miracles, but as a focus of enquiry, critical self-examination, and new ideas, it has enriched the profession at least as much as it has irritated it (Howatt 1984, in Davies and Elder, 2004: 2).

What this implies is that applied linguistics explores best ways of teaching and learning language as well as the social factors affecting the field. By investigating language-related social

problems, it contributes to ‘real-world’ issues like the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), teaching of English as a second language (TSL) and language teaching and learning in general. By its very nature, applied linguistics (like quality and EAP) takes into account both context and language. This quality affords it a multi-disciplinary scope extending beyond linguistics to include other disciplines like education. As Davies and Elder (2004) observe, language problems that applied linguistics explores are often situated within institutional contexts like the school and the workplace.

By employing applied linguistics the researcher was able to explore teaching and learning of EAP in the four selected tertiary educational institutions in Ghana as a means of providing some insights into the application of QA concepts in language education. The study was thus designed to examine the extent of student satisfaction with the quality of EAP teaching and learning in their respective institutions using a paper-based survey for students and interviews for course lecturers and administrators. It adopted a comparative case study approach and combined both qualitative and quantitative techniques for gathering primary data. These techniques would be discussed in turns later in this chapter. Secondary data were basically obtained from documentary research with relevant textbooks, journals, publicly available information posted on the worldwide web (www), and policy documents from the case institutions and state as sources. This latter set of data provided the contextual and theoretical framework for this study and also served as the foundation upon which the subject of the study and its unit of analysis were based. The main advantage derived from this method was the feasibility it provided for triangulation of points made during surveys. By the very nature of the subject under investigation and participants involved, questionnaires were considered the most appropriate survey instruments for measuring and collecting data that would be valid and reliable. This is not to claim that questionnaires are faultless. Admittedly, they have some weaknesses and strengths as well. The latter, however, far outweigh the former as discussed in 3.2.2.1. For the subject lecturers and administrators, semi-structured interviews were deemed more appropriate as their adoption facilitated a “focused, but conversational, two-way communication” (Burnett, 2008: 91).

Merits and demerits of questionnaires

As data collection instruments, questionnaires have been observed to have some drawbacks; making some researchers question the reliability and validity of data collected through this medium. Dornyei (2003: 6, 7), for instance, identifies the superficiality and simplicity of responses, the potential unreliability and low motivation of respondents, respondent literacy and L2 proficiency, the halo effect, the acquiescence and prestige biases, self-deception, and fatigue effects (in cases of long and monotonous questionnaires) as some of the major drawbacks of this tool. These criticisms notwithstanding, the value and efficiency of questionnaires as survey instruments have been attested to. Citing Gillham (2008) and Bryman (2008), Dornyei points to their “cost-effectiveness in terms of: 1. researcher time, 2. researcher effort 3. financial resources and, 4. versatility” as some key advantages (Dornyei 2003: 9). These merits make questionnaire the preferred instrument for collecting data by social science researchers and subsequently informed its choice in this research. Considering demands on respondents’ time for academic and administrative work, and also taking into account the closeness of the research period (April/May, 2012) to examinations on all the four campuses visited, getting an appreciable number of students, lecturers and administrators to partake in interviews for instance was not practicable. By adopting questionnaires, however, it was possible to collect a substantial amount of data from hundreds of students in less time and at less cost than would have been required in interviewing the same number of participants. As a full-time faculty in one of the case institutions, the use of questionnaires in this study was found to be not just time-saving, but also very economical, much in agreement with Gillham’s assertion in Dornyei (2003: 6). It was also the versatility of questionnaire that made possible the reduction of the impact of interviewer bias and subsequently enhanced the validity of data collected. As well as being ‘cheap’, the questionnaires permitted greater comparability in the data collected.

3.2.4 Questionnaire design and administering procedures

This study administered a combination of personally designed demographic questionnaires, adopted and adapted versions of templates used by the Grundtvig Learning Partnership⁶ 2009 –

⁶The Grundtvig Learning Partnership, *Quali-T*, Quality in Language Teaching for Adults was carried out between August 2009 and July 2011 by teachers and adults from 7 countries (UK, Spain, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Czech Republic and Estonia) exchanging ideas on what constitutes quality in language teaching of adults. The outcome of the partnership was the development and publication of *Guidelines for Quality in Language Teaching*. The National Centre for Languages (CILT), UK’s representative on the partnership, is a government’s recognised centre of

2011 and the European Centre for Modern Languages' for assessing quality in language teaching (Council of Europe, 2007). The adoption of established templates was deemed necessary because as Dornyei (2003: 40) points out, the questions must have already been tried and tested "through extensive piloting." Adapting them was also important because of the need for suitability for the context of receptor case study sites. A set each of different self-completed written questionnaires and interview questions were designed for the three groups of participants – students, lecturers, and administrators to fill in or respond to (Appendix B). The questionnaire was a hybrid of both closed- and open-ended items. It has been observed that the completion rate of closed-ended questions is comparatively higher than that of open-ended ones. This has been ascribed to the extra mental effort and time required of respondents to complete them (Dornyei 2003: 48) In order to reduce this tendency which sometimes leads to some respondents avoiding them altogether, open-ended items were placed toward the end, especially those meant for students.

Some questions, especially those with direct bearing on quality assurance, were deliberately repeated for all three categories of targeted respondents for purposes of cross-analysis. There were 25 questionnaire items for student respondents covering five thematic areas of quality in language teaching and learning, namely: 1. course presentation; 2. lecturer's general demeanour in class; 3. pedagogical and delivery skills; 4. physical learning environment; and 5. learner experience. Questions used in interviewing course lecturers comprised both closed and open-ended items arranged in a logical order to solicit their views on what they considered important for quality teaching and learning of the English language in the various institutions.

The 25 questions in the interview for the administrators sought to appreciate the subject from an HE administrator's perspective. In the design of the three sets of questions, care was taken in the placement of "factual" or "personal" questions. Thus questions, which requested for names, gender, age, level and course of study of student; and ranks, profession and number of years in tertiary teaching or administration of lecturers and managers, were kept at the end of the questionnaires. This was considered necessary because as Dornyei (2003: 48) rightly observes,

excellence for languages and the nominating authority for European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML). It has over 40 years' track record for the successful implementation of language-related activities for local, regional, national and international policy development and practitioner support (p.34). More information about the institution can be accessed at: <http://www.cilt.org.uk/home.aspx>

“[t]hese person/classification questions tend to be very off-putting ... [and] can result in a kind of anti-climax in the respondents and may be difficult to rekindle their enthusiasm again” if such items are placed right at the beginning. Table C3-1 under Appendix C shows the total number of questionnaires administered; the expected and actual number of respondents from each case institution, and their corresponding percentages.

A total of 567 questionnaires were administered over the period April – May, 2012 at the four case institutions. Out of this, 502 responses constituting 89 percent were received from participants. An average of three days was spent on each case campus following receipt of informed consent from university/polytechnic authorities to conduct the survey. Copies of the letter of introduction from the Director of Studies, University of Bath, were also made available to subject lecturers to confirm the identity and mission of the researcher (Appendix A). This facilitated access to EAP lecture sessions for purposes of direct observation at three of the case institutions.

Participation in the survey was on a purely voluntary basis. Except in one case, where circumstances necessitated the drop-and-collect approach for student respondents, all the others were administered personally during regular class hours and responses received on the same day. As the questionnaires were administered during the period for revision towards the end of second semester examinations, students and their teachers spared the first thirty minutes of the two-hour of their revision sessions to fill them in. With the assistance of course lecturers, student respondents were given relevant instructions on how to fill in the questionnaires and were assured of confidentiality of their identities. This was also done in writing at the beginning of the questionnaires, giving respondents the choice of anonymity. Even leaving their email addresses for subsequent contact if need be was optional.

On the part of lecturers and administrators, their busy schedules were taken into account, and so interviewing them was done at their convenience. Prior to the interviews, interviewees were each given a copy of the preliminary research questions so they could acquaint themselves with the context of the study in advance. The interviews were followed by telephone contacts and email correspondences to clarify responses that were not clear enough and to thank them for their cooperation. Their responses served as the main source of primary data of this study.

Determining the sample size

The sample for this survey comprised 550 undergraduate and diploma students as well as 17 academic and administrative staff drawn from two public and two private tertiary educational institutions in Ghana. Although this cannot be said to be a perfect sample, it was considered representative enough for this study. Aiming for a perfect sample size in a typical L2 survey research has been described as “unrealistic or simply not feasible ... in the psychometric sense” (Dornyei 2003: 60). In view of this, the study adopted a sample that was deemed representative enough of the general population of each case institution. Thus, in determining the samples, relevant characteristics that respondents had in common with the whole target population like age, gender, level or course of study (for students); and academic background, rank, and experience (for teachers and managers) were taken into account. In agreement with the Grundtvig Learning Partnership (2009-2011: 26) that “evaluation of learning is an ongoing process ... [and] takes place before placing a learner into the course, during the learning process, and again once the learner comes to the end of a course”, the survey covered beginners (i.e. first-year students) as well as final year students to solicit their views on the quality of teaching and learning of EAP at their various institutions. Although final-year students do not usually take the English Language and Communication course, their inclusion in the survey was deemed expedient because of their comparative cognitive maturity which positioned them in better appreciating the subject from hindsight. The sampling procedure, arguably referred to as “convenience” or opportunity” sampling was adopted as

It is the most common non-probability sampling type in L2 research where [m]embers of the target population are selected for the purpose of the study if they meet certain practical criteria such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, or easy accessibility (Dornyei, 2003: 61).

Dornyei further notes that “convenience samples are rarely convenience-based but are usually partially purposeful” (Ibid.). Guided by this, the study did not only consider issues relating to accessibility and availability in choosing participants, but also took into account key characteristics that could meet the research objective.

Factoring in client need analysis

The learning experience is said to be incomplete without evaluation. Its indispensability hinges on the fact that, through it learners, teachers and institutions are better positioned to determine learner progress and the enhancement of teaching. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) recognises quality as the basis for client satisfaction and provides a conceptual framework for language teaching, learning and assessment. As a tool for effective client need analysis, the CEF considers language learning activities to be founded on “the needs, motivation, *and* characteristics of learners” (Council of Europe 2001: 4). To ascertain and offer a fair judgement of the level of learner satisfaction with the quality of EAP teaching and learning at the four case study institutions, these factors were considered and incorporated in the interview and survey questionnaires that were administered. For instance, respondents were asked to state why they considered the teaching and learning of EAP at tertiary level necessary; factors they considered important in teaching; their views about the ideal teacher and whether they considered current contact hours sufficient for the study of EAP.

3.3 Justification of Methods

3.3.1 Case study methodology

Case study has been defined in different ways. Yin, for instance, considers it as

an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1984: 23).

The modern higher education environment comprises the public and private sectors. Privatisation of higher education is a contemporary phenomenon; so is the teaching and learning of EAP, the unit of analysis in this study. The cases covered in this study are made up of two public tertiary educational institutions and two private ones. Since the study’s goal is to explore the application of quality assurance principles in teaching and learning of EAP in these institutions, the case study approach was deemed appropriate as it enabled the “researcher to explore in depth a program ...”(Creswell, 2003:15), in this case, EAP. The relevance of the case study approach in such research projects is further confirmed by Bell (1999:11) that “it allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance of situation and to identify, or attempt to identify, the various

interactive processes at work.” Although some critics argue that generalisation is not always possible in the case study approach, Descombe (1998) asserts that “the extent to which findings from the case study can be generalised to other examples depends on how far the case study example is similar to others of its type” (Descombe, 1998: 36 – 7 in Bell, 1999). Expressing a divergent view, Bassey (1981) argues that

the relatability of the case study is more important than its generalizability [because if] case studies are carried out systematically and critically, if they are aimed at the improvement of education, if they are relatable, and if by publication of the findings they extend the boundaries of existing knowledge, then they are valid forms of educational research (Bassey 1981: 85, 86).

This standpoint is corroborated by Newby, who recommends that the prime objective of case studies should be the identification of transferable knowledge and that the value of a case study is measurable by what is transferrable “to other situations such as other organisations that face or might face similar problems to those in the case study or to those performing a similar role in an organisation” (Newby, 2010: 54). As a research that aims at exploring the quality assurance mechanisms employed in managing the teaching and learning of EAP in four selected Ghanaian tertiary education institutions, this study depicts not just a picture of the general situation in Ghana, but also how the case study examples fit in relation to the overall picture of Ghanaian higher education. In line with Creswell’s suggestion on the structure of a case study, this research was designed along the following lines: 1. the problem, 2. the context, 3. the issues and, 4. the lessons learned (Creswell, 1998). At the same time, it satisfied what Tellis (1997: 5) describes as “the three tenets of qualitative method: describing, understanding, and explaining.” Data for the study was drawn from multiple sources including direct or participant observation, interviews, surveys, and archival documents. Time was spent on-site to interact with students, lecturers and administrators of the four institutions involved in the study. In order to connect the study with theories, the study report includes lessons learned or patterns found. As a comparative case study involving four tertiary education institutions, the characteristics of the cases were “deliberately and knowingly varied in order to assess the significance of the difference” (Newby 2010: 54). The differentiation was done along vertical and horizontal lines. In terms of vertical differentiation, status differences and issues of hierarchy and reputation were considered

(Chapter 5). Horizontal differentiation took into account the functional differences of the four selected tertiary institutions. Stake (1995) considers a case as “a bounded system” that has working parts. In defining the case in this research, Stake’s approach was adopted. The four participating institutions were “the bounded systems of interest” with faculty and students of these institutions being “the working parts that are of particular interest.” Stern (1983) acknowledges that the introduction of empirical procedures into the study of language education is one of the critical contributions of research to language teaching theory. The fact that this study made use of observation, description, and case study strategies in exploring language learning and education in Ghana makes it empirical and valuable as an education research.

3.3.2 Designing the case study

A major characteristic of the case study methodology is its combination of other research strategies. Describing it as a “meta-method,” Johansson (2003) asserts that this makes it possible for a case to be examined from different perspectives. Baxter and Jack (2008: 1) put it more figuratively as: “This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood.” In spite of these strengths of the case study methodology, it has been criticised for being incapable of providing a generalising conclusion because of its dependence on a single case. Yin (1994) argues that using a relative sample size of 2, 10, or 100 cases, does not necessarily transform a multiple case into a macroscopic study. Establishing the parameters should therefore be the goal of the study, which should then be applied to all research. Thus, even a single case could be considered acceptable, provided it met the established objective (Tellis, 1997). This study covered more than a single case: three universities and one polytechnic were involved. A multiple-case study approach was therefore deemed appropriate as it allowed the researcher “to analyse within each setting and across settings” (Baxter and Jack, 2008: 550). The four sites were selected for strategic reasons: Their choice helped to: a) better explore the unique QA situations in teaching and learning of EAP in the private and public sectors to ensure the availability of cases for replication, and b) raise the robustness of the multiple-case study design. To ensure effectiveness in a case study, Yin recommends the following five crucial elements:

- A study’s questions
- Its propositions, if any

- Its units of analysis
- The logic linking of data to the propositions
- The criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 1994: 20).

These steps, considered indispensable if the case study researcher is to succeed in following a logical design of linking data to objectives, conclusions to data and, and also linking objectives to conclusions were taken into account in this research. In designing the study, the theoretical issues relating to QA and EAP were clearly specified and adequately presented, and from them the questions that frame the study were derived. Subsequently, the unit of analysis – EAP, a sub-unit of ESP, was defined. The appropriate number of cases to be explored in the study, that is: two public and two private tertiary educational institutions in Ghana, were then selected and the criteria for their selection equally spelt out as in Chapters 1 and 2. A survey, by means of questionnaires, observation, review of relevant literature and interviews were then chosen as they were considered appropriate and effective for data collection.

Rationale for a quantitative research approach

The quantitative research method was used for categorising the four Ghanaian subject institutions for analysis. Given the large number of participants (517) involved in this survey, the method was considered useful for generating data from the questionnaires administered for subsequent graphical and tabular presentations. This approach, which falls within the positivist tradition, is said to be objective, experimental, and values the empirical observation of cause and effect (Newby, 2010: 116). It adopts a numeric or statistical approach to research design, using data thus obtained to objectively measure reality (Williams, 2007). Unlike the qualitative approach which stems from a humanistic tradition and draws on insight and interpretation, allowing the researcher to draw on his or her subjective responses to evidence, quantitative research draws conclusions based on numerical evidence. It draws logical conclusions to relationships from evidence. Leedy and Omrod describe quantitative research as one that seeks explanations and predictions that will generate to other persons and places with the intent of establishing, confirming, or validating relationships and to develop generalisations that contribute to theory (Leedy and Omrod, 2001: 102). They categorise quantitative research under three broad areas: descriptive, experimental and causal comparative. The first, descriptive

research approach, is a basic method that examines a situation as it exists in its current state. This survey sought to explore the application of QA principles to EAP teaching and learning in the case institutions; which tools are currently being used and; the extent to which students are satisfied with their learning experience. This approach also involves “identification of attributes of a particular phenomenon based on an observational basis” (Williams, 2007:66). Using the quantitative approach to research, it was possible to discover trends in respondents’ views on the relevance of teaching and learning English at tertiary level.

Rationale for a qualitative research approach

Typically, researchers select the qualitative approach for research questions that require textual data. Whereas Williams (2007: 67) describes it as a “holistic approach that involves discovery”, Newby considers it an approach that seeks to understand “how people choose to live their lives, the meanings they give to their experiences and their feelings about their condition” Newby (2010: 115). In assessing how students, teachers, and managers felt about the EAP course in the selected institutions, the qualitative approach lent itself as an appropriate method for conducting the research. Also, with the intention of collecting data through surveys, interviews and document analysis, this approach was deemed relevant because “it involves purposeful use for describing, explaining, and interpreting collected data” (Williams, 2007:67). According to Creswell, the qualitative approach is an ‘effective model’ occurring in a natural setting that makes it possible for the researcher to develop a level of detail from being highly involved in the actual experience (Creswell, 2003). Emerging from the post-positivist paradigm and having its premises built on inductive reasoning, qualitative research covers five areas: 1. case study, 2. ethnography study, 3. phenomenological study, 4. grounded theory study, and 5. content analysis. Since the case studies conducted fell within the qualitative framework; it was considered a relevant tool to employ. As a naturalistic enquiry, it enabled the researcher to obtain the relevant data on quality and quality assurance practices in Ghanaian higher education in as natural a setting as possible. Also, since the research involved “a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of materials for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes or biases” (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001: 155), the approach encompassed content analysis too.

Rationale for a multi-method approach

The preceding discussions on the method and design of this study indicate that there was the need to employ a multi-method approach since the research question itself required that more than one method of research was adopted. Tellis asserts that overreliance on purely quantitative techniques, for instance, has the tendency of obscuring some of the important information that the researcher would otherwise have uncovered (Tellis 1997: 5). It was therefore recommendable that methods of collecting or analysing data from the quantitative and qualitative research approaches were incorporated in a single research study (Creswell, 2003). This research involved the collection and analysis of not only numerical data, which is characteristic of quantitative research; but also narrative data, which is customary of qualitative research as an attempt was made to find answers to the research questions. In the data collection process, a survey containing both closed- and open-ended questions was used at the four tertiary education institutions to collect numerical and qualitative data. As a single study employing multiple approaches, it was necessary to integrate the strands at some point. This is because both positivistic and naturalistic approaches are noted to have some shortcomings. Lynch (1988) therefore advises the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches complementarily. To achieve this, triangulation was used, as case study itself has been described as a “triangulated research strategy”. Stake (1995) describes the protocols that are used to ensure accuracy and alternative explanations as “triangulation”. To apply this to case studies, Yin recommends the use of multiple sources of data (Yin, 1994). Triangulation includes: direct observation by the researcher within the case’s own environment, and interviewing case participants for explanations and interpretations of operational data and analyses of written documents. For purposes of cross-sectional confirmation in this study, the above tools were adopted.

3.4 Philosophical Considerations: The Ontology-Epistemology Divide

3.4.1 Ontology – the nature of being

Generally, researchers agree that individual perceptions of human nature can impact the approach they adopt in their investigations. Cohen et al (2007) point out that there is a link between how one views socially constructed realities and choices one might make when it comes to methodological considerations. In conducting this research, differing ontological perspectives (i.e. ways of viewing social reality) were considered. To ensure awareness of the philosophical

premises on which to base arguments justifying the research processes and findings, two considerations stood out:

1. Adopting the belief that the world of social interactions exists independently of what one perceives it to be; and
2. Viewing social reality as being co-constructed by individuals interacting actively and making meaning of the world, and thereby approaching the search for truth in people's lived experiences through rigorous interpretation (Graue and Walsh, 1998 in Bracken 2010).

To ensure a rigorous interpretation of the search for truth in the lived experiences of the subjects of this study, their historical, cultural and philosophical backgrounds were addressed. Ontology for QA and EAP which this study seeks to explore, emanates from the idea that there are universals in reality which are expressed in the general term 'quality' and 'ESP' respectively. QA is a class of 'quality' while EAP is a branch of ESP. Ontology then is the study of classes, and the relations between them, for example, what Bodenreider et al term as

the *is_a* relation which obtains between two classes when it is a matter of scientific law that all instances of the first class are instances of the second, or the *part_of* relation which obtains between two classes when it is a matter of scientific law that instances of the first exist always as parts of instances in the second

(Bodenreider et al., 2004: 3).

3.4.2 Epistemology – how knowledge is shared

Epistemology studies how cognitive subjects come to know the truth about given phenomena in reality (Bodenreider et al, 2004). In the sense that is relevant to this DBA research, epistemology is the study of quality in higher education or teaching and learning of EAP. Thus, it encompasses how Ghanaian higher education institutions assure quality in the teaching and learning of English for Academic Purposes. This research explores the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms in the teaching and learning of EAP not as phenomena representing “instances or classes in reality but rather features reflecting” (Ibid.) a Sub-Saharan African HE environment where English is the L2 of majority of the students and teachers.

3.4.3 Measuring ‘effectiveness’ in EAP teaching and learning

To Measure the effectiveness of a language programme, Pike (1954) recommends that its ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ dimensions be taken into account. This is necessary because in studying the cultural system of a given society, there is the possibility of the analyst taking the point of view of either the insider or the outsider (discussed in detail under 2.6). Bearing in mind that naturalistic ontology views reality as a social construct that is subject to change through the process of investigation, naturalist evaluation tools were not left out. What actually happens in the EAP programmes at the four case institutions was examined and duly reported on under Chapters 4 and 5. The major research methods employed in this approach were observation, questionnaires, document reviews and, to a lesser extent, interviews. To gain ‘emic’ understanding of programmes, evaluators normally observe the actions and participants in “natural occurring settings”(Thanh Van, 2008). He also attests that in order to derive a thorough understanding of programmes, investigators turn themselves into insiders in the programme by exploiting ‘emic’ approach, thus enabling them to confirm their interpretation. In view of this, a minimum of two days was spent on each of the four campuses to observe how their EAP programmes are taught and to administer the questionnaires.

3.5 Analysing the Data

The varied forms of data collected were analysed using version 16.0 of the computer-aided quantitative data analysis software – SPSS for data that were conducive to statistical analysis, while adopting “analytic” strategies to analyse data derived from unstructured open-ended questionnaires. Content analysis is said to be the reviewing “of forms of human communication including books, newspapers, and films as well as other forms in order to identify patterns, themes or biases” (Williams, 2007: 69). The method is designed in such a way that it enables the researcher to identify specific characteristics from the content in human communication. In the process, verbal, visual, behavioural patterns, themes, or biases are explored by the researcher. To achieve the highest objective analysis possible, the procedural process of the content analysis study is designed to involve identifying the body of material to be studied and defining the characteristics or qualities to be explored (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). Its two-step data collection process includes:

1. analyzing the materials and putting them in a frequency table as each characteristic quality is mentioned, and

2. conducting a statistical analysis and reporting the results in a quantitative format.

English for Academic Purposes, as a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), deals with the language and related skills that students need to acquire in order to undertake studies in higher education through the medium of English. As such, the teaching content is matched to the learners' requirements (Robinson, 1991). To best appreciate how far this objective is being achieved in Ghanaian higher education circles, the content analysis approach was deemed appropriate for adoption, especially as the study involved quantitative data. As a study involving qualitative methods as well, a naturalistic approach was adopted where necessary. Responses received from the survey were first summarised into coherent categories from which relevant themes were identified and labeled in accordance with some of the QA themes highlighted in Chapter 2 under Literature Review. Recurrent themes identified in the course of reading through the data were added to the list of emergent categories as exemplified in Table C3-2 in Appendix C. The themes were generated through reading verbatim responses from participants. Though tedious, it was deemed necessary for a true reflection of subcategories in the data and to ensure a clear interpretation of the data.

3.5.1 Interpretation

As a study involving a multiple-case design, care was taken in ensuring that evidence provided in the study was convincing enough to the reader. To achieve this, the limits of the cases covered by the study were clearly defined with the strengths and drawbacks in various methods used also pointed out. Typical of multiple-case studies, this research followed “a replication of logic” (Tellis 1997). Facts were obtained from a variety of sources and conclusions drawn were based on those facts. In order to establish the similarities and differences of cases to facilitate a comparative analysis in Chapter 5, the cases were first reported on individually in Chapter 4. This format was considered fitting for the eventual presentation of a narrative account on participant perspectives on “quality teaching” at their respective institutions. Practices deemed recommendable for replication are subsequently identified and suggestions for further research also made in Chapter 5.

Validation

Various processes exist for validating research findings. One that best suits case studies is triangulation. As Tellis (1997: 8) notes, “[t]he need for triangulation arises from the ethical need

to confirm the validity of the process.” In this research, this need was met through the adoption of mixed methods and the multiple sources of data derived from survey respondents from the four case institutions and the analysis of documents.

3.6 Significance

The review of literature on quality assurance and its application to English language teaching in Chapters 1 and 2 revealed that not much work has been done in the area. This research thus contributes to knowledge by exploring the application of quality assurance principles in the teaching and learning of EAP in a multilingual context like Ghana's. EAP in tertiary educational circles is pervasive, as it cuts across all academic disciplines. Assuring quality in its teaching and learning is crucial, especially in a country where English is the only official language and the main medium of instruction from upper primary to university level. As a research that seeks to examine how quality can be enhanced in the teaching and learning of the language for specific purposes in institutions of higher learning, this study is certainly significant.

3.7 Ethical and Protocol Issues

It is common practice in academia that researchers follow codes of practice and protocols to ensure that participants are fully aware of the purpose of the research, and also understand their rights. In line with this, authorities of all the four institutions involved in this study were officially informed about project through a formal letter from the Director of Studies, (DBA, HEM), University of Bath. The letter, in addition to introducing the researcher, also disclosed his intent to conduct research on their various campuses, spelt out the objectives of this study, identified target participants, and specified the duration of the fieldwork. The fieldwork began only after informed consent from the appropriate authorities had been received. The research ethics of the University of Bath accessible at www.bath.ac.uk/research/ethics constituted the principal guiding principles. The university requires that all research undertaken take into account “the potential ethical implications.” To ensure that this study met the standards of quality empirical research, the researcher was guided by the following questions:

- How should I be towards the people that I am studying?
- What ethical considerations must I take into account?
- How would I mitigate the Hawthorne effect and possible personal biases?

To win the trust of participants, the adoption of the principle of ‘informed consent’ helped ensure careful preparation, explanation of the research objective, and consulting management of the case institutions before data collection commenced (Cohen and Manion, 1994: 349-760). During the fieldwork, participants were informed of their rights and given assurance of protection of their privacy. Confidentiality of the data and identities of persons interviewed and respondents to the questionnaires were absolutely maintained in order that the research did not place any of them at risk of harm. Respondents were given the option to remain anonymous. Research has also shown that study subjects tend to change their attitudes when they realise that they are being observed. As the process included observation and being present while the questionnaires were being administered, this phenomenon, known as “the Hawthorne effect” was likely. To check this, the necessary methodological tools were put in place. After the distribution of questionnaires, the researcher took backstage to be less conspicuous, and allowed course lecturers to supervise until the responses were ready for collection. As an employee of one of the tertiary institutions involved in the study, there was the tendency of taking certain issues for granted, because of the ‘insider’ status of the researcher. For instance, the assumption of being already privy to some relevant pieces of information or knowing some players and therefore not seeing the need to observe the appropriate protocol was possible. To avoid this and to ensure that ensure quality research was done, permission was duly sought from authorities and participants just like in the other cases.

3.8 Setting the Limits

The higher education landscape in Ghana has witnessed a phenomenal increase in the number of private and public institutions. The current study is concerned only with four tertiary educational institutions (two each from the public and private sectors) out of the over 60 universities and 10 polytechnics in the country. The choice of English for Academic Purposes as the unit of analysis in itself constitutes a limitation, as there are various other branches of English for Specific Purposes and numerous disciplines offered at the universities and polytechnics. Even after limiting the study to EAP, a look at course documentations, typical academic texts in students’ fields, students’ work, and test or examination results as part of examining the EAP programmes was not possible because of time constraint. On the issue of “quality”, the literature indicates that evaluating ‘quality’ has no clear-cut or single set of outcomes, as defining the term itself has been embroiled in turmoil. This is further complicated by the fact that quality assurance is

influenced by national as well as institutional contexts. Other factors that could limit the scientific quality of the study bordered on the very methods and tools adopted in the survey. Case studies, quantitative and qualitative approaches to research as well as the use of questionnaires as instruments have been noted to have some drawbacks. Thus, it was necessary to put in appropriate measures to ensure the robustness of the research. For instance, in order to avoid the tendency of answering questions that were too broad, a common pitfall associated with case studies, cases had to be ‘bound’ by setting the parameters and determining what the cases for this study would not be. Yin (2003), Stake (1995), and their contemporaries have suggested the placing of boundaries on cases as a means of preventing this “explosion” from happening. Citing others, Baxter and Jack (2008) summarise these case-binding mechanisms as:

- time and place (Creswell 2003);
- time and activity (Stake 1995); and
- definition and context (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

They consider binding the case as an important way of ensuring that the study remains in scope (Baxter and Jack, 2008:547). Within the context of this study, the choice of the four case study sites and the use of EAP as the unit of analysis were informed by this consideration. Considering the enormity of time constraint, financial and other demands involved in conducting a research involving all tertiary institutions in Ghana, it was thought wise to limit the HEIs to a reasonable number of four. Also, each of the case institutions was established at a different point in time. Though established within the same country and having the identical prime objective of providing tertiary education, the institutions are: 1. strategically located in different regions; 2. operate within different institutional contexts, and 3. engaged in different forms of academic activity. It is also worth pointing out that though QA standards may be the same, the modes of applying them can vary from institution to institution. This constitutes a potential source of bias, as the mode of application that the researcher is used to could be adopted as the yardstick for assessing others. To provide a fair assessment of the quality situation in the case institutions, the Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) was adopted because of its neutrality and recognition of quality as the basis for client satisfaction as well as its provision of a conceptual framework for language teaching, learning and assessment.

Questionnaires, which constituted the main survey instruments in this study, are said to be ineffective as a result of the simplicity of responses they generate due to limitations emanating from unreliable and unmotivated respondents, their biases, self-deception, literacy and fatigue. As a means of checking this, questionnaires were designed in such a way that they could be filled in within 25 to 30 minutes. Respondents were also encouraged to be as candid as possible in their responses as the research was for purely academic purposes and that there were no wrong responses. Large class sizes in almost all the case institutions could also compromise objectivity and originality of responses and subsequently affect the quality of data, as congestion in class could lead to some student respondents conferring before answering. Student participants were pre-informed that the exercise was not an examination and that all participants should endeavour to do independent work. Subject lecturers were also present to help keep order during the process.

Quantitative methods is criticised for its lack of flexibility and the potential to limit research to pre-decided aims of researchers while overlooking other possible relevant issues that subjects could not raise (Descombe, 1998). Though qualitative research is considered a better option for dealing with such issues, the likelihood of its results being oversimplified and generalised by the researcher through themes generated has attracted some criticism. As a means of pooling the strengths of the two methods, a mixed-methods approach was adopted with triangulation as the tool for ensuring reliability and validity.

Chapter 4 Individual Case Study Findings

This chapter presents a summary of the findings in each of the four case institutions in turn as a background to Chapter 5 where the materials are restructured to reflect the research questions. This is to facilitate discussions of findings across the institutions, and then relate them to the literature so that some recommendations could be made at the end. The case findings provide an interesting overview of the types of QA mechanisms being applied to EAP teaching and learning. Analysing the case reports presents valuable proofs to major trends identified in the literature review in Chapter 2 and serve as empirical cases in point of the typical implementation of quality in English training for tertiary-level students in Ghana. The analysis also provides an opportunity for underscoring the interface between theory-research gaps and the day-to-day experiences of English teachers and learners. With most of the data coming from students, priority is given to the “student view,” which constitutes one of the strengths of this thesis. Limiting the survey and interview to only a few staff members was deliberate, as it was intended to seek views of administrative and academic staff who were directly involved in QA activities or teaching the EAP course. The findings are discussed in turn beginning with the Wa Polytechnic.

4.1 Case HEI 1: Wa Polytechnic (Wa Poly)

At Wa Polytechnic, a total sample size of 155 comprising 150 students, 2 administrators, and 3 course lecturers was targeted for the survey and interviews. They included the following:

- Assistant Registrar (Academic Affairs);
- Planning Officer (Acting QA Coordinator);
- Communication Skills/English Language Lecturers;
- Students from the Schools of Business, Engineering, and Applied Science and Technology.

While all the five academic and administrative staff participated in the interview, only 138 student respondents (92%) returned their completed questionnaires. The opinions of the academic and administrative staff were solicited largely through open-ended and structured interviews, while those of students (94%) were sought using the survey method. Details of the

data collection process are provided under 3.2.3. Their responses served as the main source of primary data for this study.

4.1.1 Background and context

Established in 1999 as the last of 10 regional polytechnics in Ghana, Wa Polytechnic began running Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes in 2003. Currently the polytechnic is accredited by the National Accreditation Board (NAB) to offer eight tertiary programmes across three schools: the Schools of Business, Engineering and Applied Science and Technology. It has a staff strength 182 comprising 83 academic and 99 management and supporting staff. From an initial intake of 35 in 2003/2004, Wa Polytechnic currently has a total student population of 1,418 full-time students (496 percent increase) registered for the 2011/2012 academic year.

The polytechnic is located in Wa, the administrative capital of the Upper West Region of Ghana; some 442 miles (712 kilometers) from Accra, the national capital. According to the 2010 Ghana Population and Housing Census, the population of the municipality is estimated at 107,214, about 15.3% of the total regional population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). In terms of climate, the region has two seasons, the dry and the wet seasons. The latter commences from early April and ends in October; while the former, which is usually characterized by cold and hazy harmattan weather, begins in early November and lasts till April when the early rains set in. Temperatures in the region range between 15 degrees Celsius and 40 degrees Celsius during hot weather. Though a commercial town, Wa is home to three tertiary educational institutions. Wa Poly, one of the three tertiary institutions in the municipality is, arguably, the first fully fledged tertiary educational institution there. The reason is that even though the Wa Campus of the University for Development Studies (UDS, one of the case study sites) was established earlier, it is not autonomous as it is only one of the three campuses of the multi-campus UDS. The third tertiary institution in the town, Nusrat Jahan Ahmadiyya College of Education, was elevated to tertiary status in 2010.

The polytechnic campus is fairly new, and is situated at the south-western part of the Wa municipality on a 296-acre square land. Academic and administrative work began in earnest on the new campus in 2007. Major completed buildings include an administration block, a lecture hall complex, a multi-purpose workshop, and some staff accommodation. A three-storey library building is complete and is yet to be furnished, stocked and commissioned. In the interim, one of

the lecture halls houses the library. A computer laboratory is housed in the ground floor of the administration block. A thousand-bed hostel facility for students is about 40% complete, but work is currently at a standstill following the abrogation of the contract. All students stay in Wa town and make the distance of seven kilometers daily either on foot, by bicycle or motor-cycles. Very few students come to the polytechnic in their own cars or are assisted by their spouses and friends. There are no bus services to the campus yet, and taxi fares are quite high (GHC4.00 about £1.50), way beyond the scope of the students' purse. Though some lectures run till 7: 00 p.m., the campus is yet to have some street lights installed and gets very dark at night. The internal road network is also yet to be developed. In spite of all these challenges, the campus landscape is dotted with modern buildings which are well-ventilated and illuminated for academic work.

4.1.2 Wa Poly: Mission and strategy

Wa Poly launched a ten-year strategic plan in 2006 and carried out a mid-term review in 2011. Its mission stresses the polytechnic's commitment to "providing quality tertiary education through offering three-year Higher National Diploma (HND), Degree and non-formal short-term programmes and courses" (Wa Polytechnic, 2006b: 4). With quality, equity, transparency, team spirit, innovativeness and environmental sustainability as its core values, Wa Poly's vision is: "[t]o become a world class centre for applied technology and career-focused education for rural poverty reduction and national development" (Ibid.). This vision is defined by the following five strategic thrusts:

1. Initiate action programmes to enhance and promote training, research and innovation
2. Develop highly qualified human resources to deliver polytechnic programmes
3. Develop physical infrastructure and support services to attract staff and students, and to enhance teaching; learning and research
4. Expand use of ICT throughout the institution
5. Improve financial resource mobilisation and management

As the youngest polytechnic in Ghana and competing with several other bigger and older public institutions for scarce and dwindling financial and other resources from government, these corporate strategic directions were identified as the forces that could propel Wa Poly to attain its desired state. Even though EAP is not specifically mentioned, it is clear from the mission, vision

and core values that the overall aim of the strategic plan is the provision of quality teaching and learning, EAP inclusive. Therefore, to determine whether Wa Poly is succeeding or failing, its declared mission and objectives should serve as the yardstick.

Factors influencing Wa Poly's culture

To determine factors affecting the culture of Wa Poly, views of managers of the institution were sought. This question was not put to students and lecturers, the other two categories of respondents in this study; the reason being that the dual task of creating and managing culture constitutes one of the most crucial roles of leadership (Farlinger et al., 2010). The culture of Wa Poly is enshrined in its motto: “Knowledge, application and service.” Against this backdrop the managers view the culture of the polytechnic as being influenced by the acquisition of relevant knowledge, its application to industry, and service to the community. Wa Poly regards quality as a critical factor in building and maintaining reputation so as to win support of the public. As earlier acknowledged, the polytechnic is a new institution, and that status in itself has an implication for quality implementation. A major consequence of that for QA is that it can take quite some time for institutional cultures (including ‘quality cultures’) to develop.

4.1.3 Implementing QA for quality at Wa Poly

“Quality,” in the context of Wa Poly, is regarded as “the ability of our graduates to meet threshold standards of competence for employment, further studies and effective civil participation” Wa Polytechnic 2011: 5).Objective 9 of Strategic Thrust 1 of the Wa Polytechnic Strategic Plan specifically mentions the development of a quality assurance framework in teaching, research and service using the three-pronged strategy of:

- developing a QA department (planning) and equipping it with materials and equipment;
- training staff in monitoring and evaluation procedures, and
- implementing monitoring and evaluation system for all programmes

(Wa Polytechnic, 2006b: 14).

Pending the full establishment of a QA Unit and the subsequent constitution of QA Committee, the head of the Planning Department is required by the Wa Polytechnic Quality Assurance Policy to:

coordinate this process [i.e. carrying out established and widely disseminated performance standards] centrally and to provide units with professional support in their perpetual process of self-evaluation and improvement (Wa Polytechnic, 2011: 2).

Wa Poly has in place internal QA systems for student admissions, teaching and assessment as well as the recruitment and retention of staff similar to those of institutions of like mission. The Wa Polytechnic Statutes mandate relevant committees and boards like the Executive Committee, Academic Board, School Boards, Examinations and Time-table Committee, and the Joint Admissions Committee to work in their various and collective capacities to ensure that academic activities in the institution are fit for the purpose for which they are being run and that clients get value for their money (Wa Polytechnic, 2006c). Besides these internal mechanisms, the polytechnic is also subject to external QA regimes overseen by state-funded supervisory and regulatory bodies like the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), National Accreditation Board (NAB), the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations, and recently the National Council for Vocational and Education and Training (COTVET). Staff and students taking professional examinations that are not directly under the purview of these bodies are required to abide by quality standards set by the relevant professional body. They include the Ghana Institute of Surveyors, Institute of Chartered Accountants (ICA-Ghana), Institute of Bankers, Institute of Architects and the Ghana Institute of Engineers. This research also sought views of participants on how good teaching is assessed in their institution; the tools used in the assessment and evaluation process; and the mechanisms put in place to ensure effective implementation of quality. Their observations are discussed in turn and subsequently summarised.

Participant perspectives on QA and control tools at Wa Poly

It was established from the student responses that available tools for evaluating good teaching at Wa Poly include periodic assessment and appraisal of teachers; observation of teacher's bearing and pedagogical skills in class, and teacher qualification or experience. Table D4.1-1 under Appendix D presents a summary of their views. From the statistics, majority of student respondents (68.8%) from Wa Poly rated observation as the most frequently used tool for assessing teaching quality in the institution. Periodic assessment and appraisal attracted (23.2%) of the responses, with the remaining 8% identifying teacher qualification and experience. The

results show that various evaluation tools exist, but are employed in varying degrees by the polytechnic.

To determine learner progress, periodic assessment of students' progress is necessary. An academic perspective on that was sought from the three subject lecturers who were interviewed. The course lecturers interviewed identified oral quizzes, group and individual assignments, tests, term papers and examinations as tools used to assess the progress of learners. Assessing good teaching in the polytechnic, they observed, involves both internal and external QA agents. Surveys and questionnaires are used for internal quality assessment together with observation of teachers' bearing in class, their general pedagogical skills, self-expression, punctuality, physical appearance, cordiality/interactivity, regularity, and student performance. This is further strengthened through monitoring and supervision of teachers by management, deans and heads of department. External QA audits, on the other hand, entail the inspection of the physical learning environment for the availability of relevant technology/audio-visuals, quality of teaching and learning materials, and of assessment. The qualification and/or experience of teachers are also taken into account. The lecturers involved in this study, cited inspection, observation and student/lecturer appraisal as some of the existing tools in the institution.

The managers interviewed identified questionnaires as the preferred tool for assessing quality tuition, followed by student/teacher appraisal, discussion, and publication which they considered to be of equal importance. On existing QA mechanisms at Wa Poly, they cited the use of questionnaires for staff appraisal. They also affirmed the existence of a system for self-evaluation involving the registry, academic departments, and individual lecturers. Heads of department do the assessment using questionnaire forms designed by the registry. For purposes of fairness and authentication, comments are invited from the teachers being assessed before the final reports are forwarded through deans of the relevant schools to the Registrar for onward transmission to the Rector. Besides these internal mechanisms, the administrators also mentioned periodic inspections, which in the context of Wa Poly, involved reviewing the rules of accreditation and aligning courses to their intended goals and objectives for which they were established; and, financial auditing of expenses. Commenting on the impact of the pre- and post-inspection processes on Wa Poly, the managers observed: *"This makes the assessment process effective. It gives us the opportunity to know how closer or committed we are to the goal or how much we have deviated from it."*

In all, participants agreed on most of the existing quality evaluation tools at the Wa Polytechnic, and those currently available to it, but not necessarily used. An interesting observation is that all the three categories of respondents agreed on student/teacher appraisal, but not on the tools. While the teachers and their students agreed on the use of observation, the administrators did not mention it at all. Like their students, the teachers also considered observation as a prominent assessment tool equaling student/teacher appraisal in usage; and also identified inspection, and peer review (which they said was used to a lesser extent). Student respondents, however, failed to mention these two probably because they are not directly involved in those processes. Surprisingly, the administrators were the only group of participants who identified publication as a tool for assessing quality tuition. It was surprising that the lecturers, whose promotion depends largely on publication, failed to identify it. The existence of these discrepancies in responses coming from staff and students from the same institution tends to affirm the view of managers discussed earlier that the institution had not been able to demonstrate clearly its commitments to quality due to delay in the full operationalisation of the QA unit. The ultimate goal of all quality assurance in HE is not just the provision of quality service to students as the primary “customers”, but to also ensure that graduates are quality products. To realise this objective, there is need for the existence of subject standards to serve as benchmarks for various course offerings. The next paragraph examines some of these mechanisms within the context of Wa Poly.

Applying Quality Principles for Effective Teaching and Learning of EAP

To establish from the learners the state of their EAP learning experience, respondents were asked to rate the gap between what they expected in the language and communication course and what their actual experiences were at the time of data collection for this study. A summary of a correlation analysis used to determine whether students’ expectations in the EAP course had indeed been met is presented in Table D4.1-2 of Appendix D. From the table, it could be concluded that with a p-value of 0.124 and sig-value of 0.148 testing with an alpha value of 0.05, there is enough evidence to reject any argument that there is a significant relationship between student expectations before taking the language and communication course and improvement in their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills after the course. This is because the sig-value is greater than the alpha value. Therefore there is no relationship between the two. By implication the gap between student expectations before taking the language and communication

course is close and has no bearing on improvement in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of students of Wa Poly.

Standards Serving as Benchmarks for EAP Teaching and Learning at Wa Poly

The teaching, learning, and assessment of language constitute an integral part of QA in language education. For the successful implementation of these interconnected activities, there is need for subject standards that would provide the necessary benchmarks. To assess the quality of the teaching and learning of EAP would very much depend on the extent to which the course objectives have been realised. Generally, the Communication Skills (EAP) course at Wa Poly aims at enabling students to:

1. be able to make notes, develop reading and writing skills;
2. understand conventional usage; use the special cases of verb agreement; and use the punctuation sign correctly;
3. know the difference between sentences, clauses and phrases, and the structure of a sentence;
4. comprehend a passage; summarise a passage; and understand figures of speech;
5. make notes and develop reading skills;
6. know the conventions of usage and develop writing skills (NABPTEX, 2001: 7 & 21).

Thus, the quality of teaching and learning of EAP at Wa Poly can be determined within the institution's context by noting the extent to which these set aims were being achieved, using data from survey respondents and interviewees as guide. On which standards served as the benchmarks for evaluating EAP teaching, learning, and assessment at Wa Poly, opinions of the three groups of participants in this study were sought and are discussed in turn below.

Participant perspectives on standards serving as benchmarks

On how "high quality tuition" can be achieved within English language learning at Wa Poly, student respondents identified a wide range of standards that could serve as benchmarks for assessing the quality of EAP teaching in the institution. They include: pedagogy, professionalism, relevance and applicability of topics taught in the course. Majority of respondents identified quality pedagogy, interactivity and practical learning experience as the panacea. Appointing qualified professionals to teach the course followed in importance; while relevance and applicability of topics and high quality teaching and learning were rated least

important. Surprisingly, none of the 138 students cited the CEF. Their proposed benchmarks also tended to be more related to the processes for ensuring quality teaching and learning than specific targets that should be met in the course.

As regards subject standards serving as benchmarks for EAP teaching and learning, the subject lecturers identified the syllabus for Communication Skills and the recommended grading scale of A to D at the end of each semester. Concerning factors that determined the choice of these benchmarks, one of the lecturers cited the fact that 1) majority of students “battle with” basic sentence level development problems; 2) general expression work is far below standard; 3) existing syllabuses downplay language usage with emphasis rather being on context; 4) contact/credit hours for English is inadequate, and 5) the need to ensure quality in the products for the benefit of society.

While two of the lecturers declined to comment on the effectiveness of these mechanisms at enhancing EAP teaching at the polytechnic; one attested to there being a “modest improvement” in student self-expression. This was attributed to devoting extra time to the teaching of structure and usage in all three English-centred courses outside the official allotted time of two hours per week. On whether they had any idea about the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), only one out of the three lecturers responded in the affirmative. He had heard about it at a seminar organised by the Ghana Association of French Teachers (GAFT), but could not claim to be conversant with it.

Like the teachers, the administrators did not have any idea about the CEFR. They considered the QA policy that stipulates the periodic review of academic programmes to confirm the extent to which they are meaningfully structured and organised and the assessment of how far goals and learning objectives are being achieved as one that directly impacts the teaching and learning of EAP at Wa Poly. They also identified the facilitation of the development and assessment of curricula; inter and intra-institutional workshops and seminars on quality related issues as some of the activities of the QA unit that directly affect EAP teaching.

Overall

In spite of the popularity of the CEFR as an international standards reference outlining benchmarks for language teaching in Europe and beyond, none of the respondents in this study

cited it. The only interviewee, who admitted having heard about it, conceded that he did not know how it operates. The CEFR's "Global Scale" which ranges from A1 to C2 serves as common reference levels. It describes what a learner can do at six specific levels A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. A1 and A2 are for the basic user; B1 and B2 for the independent user; and C1 and C2 for the proficient user. These levels match general competency concepts of basic, intermediate, and advanced. Common reference levels are based on a set of "can do" statements describing what a learner is capable of, not what he/she cannot do or does wrong (Council of Europe, 2001). Learners involved in this study, rather than cite benchmarks for quality EAP teaching identified pedagogy, professionalism, relevance, and applicability of topics taught in the course as ways of achieving "high quality" learning experience in Wa Poly. Their teachers on the other hand, identified the syllabus for Communication Skills (EAP) and the recommended grading scale of A-D used in end of semester examinations as benchmarks. The objectives of the syllabus spell out what competences learners are expected to acquire by the end of the course. This is probably the closest any group of participants came in identifying benchmarks that are similar to the "global scale" of the CEFR. The managers, like the students, did not identify any specific benchmark. Instead, they cited existing QA policies and mechanisms like the periodic review of academic programmes and organising of seminars on quality related issues as having a direct bearing on quality EAP teaching.

4.1.4 Respondents' Perspective on "High Quality" Teaching

The term "quality" itself has been variedly defined based on the different contexts and angles of thought of scholars who attempt defining it. Qualifying it with the adjective "high" makes it even murkier an affair to tackle. Thus, rather than theorize on what should or should not be considered as "excellence" in teaching, this study chose to instead, solicit views of students, their teachers, and managers on what they understand by the concept. The subject is considered first from the student perspective.

On what they understood by "high quality" tuition and how that could be achieved within EAP language learning, Wa Poly student participants expressed varied views about the concept. A summary of that is presented in Table D4.1-3 under Appendix D. The results show that majority (47.1%) of the respondents identified the learning environment as the most crucial element in enhancing teaching quality. Teacher's demeanour in class, mode of delivery, pedagogy, and

course presentation followed with 16.7%, 15.9%, 13.8%, and 6.5% respectively. By learning environment, the students implied the existence of an enabling teaching and learning environment with available relevant teaching and learning materials and technology, good lecturers, good language policies, learner enthusiasm, and teacher motivation. Under course presentation, respondents said they desired to see their teachers demonstrate mastery of the English language, and encourage reading, good listening, with the resultant effect being the enhancement of communication skills and the production of quality graduates that would constitute an efficient human resource base for the country.

The students also considered the discussion of marked scripts by their teachers a very critical element in “high quality” teaching. Asked whether their teachers discussed marked scripts with them in class, majority (87%) of the Wa Poly students affirmed that their teachers discussed marked scripts with them after quizzes and examinations, with only 13% responding in the negative (not displayed in table). On the usefulness of the discussions to learners, as much as 88.4% of the respondents said they considered it very helpful; 9.4% said it was helpful; and the remaining two percent said it was not. As to whether their teachers used the suggestions to improve on examination questions or not, majority the students responded in the affirmative.

The lecturers saw “high quality” tuition as *“a combination of progressive methodology and latest teaching and learning materials in an activity-centred class and field interaction.”* By this, they implied teaching effectively to ensure that certain standards are met and good output also obtained. To achieve “high quality” teaching and learning of English, the lecturers recommended the provision of quality teaching and learning materials and facilities like language laboratories. The availability of quality language laboratory facilities, they argued, would help improve oral expression (i.e. elocution), and again serve as a good *“substitute for the native English community.”* They also recommended the use of appropriate pedagogy and high teaching and learning standards as well as appointing professionals to handle the course. Applying good teaching methodologies by ensuring high standards in the teaching and learning of English would contribute significantly to meeting learner needs and aspirations, and thereby, boost the overall learning experience. Introducing prescribed literature books for reading by students, organising debates and specially designed language seminars, awarding prizes for good

performance in English, and encouraging teachers to use audio-visuals and attend refresher courses could all help improve upon the teaching and learning of English in the institution.

Unlike their academic colleagues, the administrators who were interviewed identified the periodic review of academic programmes to ensure that they are meaningfully structured and organised for the achievement of learning objectives as a key ingredient of “high quality” tuition.

Overall, student participants in the survey considered both physical and social environmental factors as contributory to the realisation of “high quality” tuition. Their teachers identified the adoption of appropriate methodology (or pedagogy) and the availability of quality teaching and learning materials as vital tools in achieving “high quality” teaching. The administrators felt reviewing of academic programmes on a regular basis was the answer. The fact that the survey respondents and interviewees gave varied opinions on what constituted “high quality” was not surprising because, as acknowledged earlier, it only confirms the general observation in the QA literature that attempts at finding a definition to the term “quality,” have often been greeted with divergent views (Mishra, 2006). Interestingly, results of this study further confirm current research findings which have proven that students generally welcome feedback. Commenting on marking as a feedback tool, Nott (2013: 4) for instance, observes that “[t]he principal purpose of marking is to provide students with feedback on their performance: marking thus stands at the sharp end, at the point of implementation, of formative assessment.” Marking and discussing the scripts afterwards with students is indeed an important exercise in the implementation of quality language teaching. It provides equal opportunity to both the teacher and the learner to improve upon their work.

4.1.5 Participant Self-Evaluation: Lecturers and Learners

This was limited to only students and their lecturers. The administrators were left out because of their apparent lack of direct involvement in language teaching. The Language and Communication (EAP) course aims at developing the general linguistic skills of students in English, improving their grammar and usage, and enhancing their writing skills. Student participants in this study were asked whether all these objectives were being achieved at their institution. Majority of the Wa Poly student respondents (83.3%) affirmed that the objectives of the EAP course at the institution were being achieved while 16.7% disagreed to this assertion. When probed further on the extent to which the course had met learners’ expectations, some

interesting confirmations emerged. The results (not displayed on table here) showed that 73.9% of the respondents agreed that the EAP course met their expectation; 9.4% said it exceeded it; and 16.7 % said it fell short of their expectation. What the study finds quite intriguing is that the two sets of responses confirmed each other. While 83% (74 + 9) expressed satisfaction with the course, the same percentage (83%) confirmed the achievement of course objectives. The percentage of respondents (16.7%) expressing dissatisfaction with the quality of the course was the same in both cases. This confirmation thus represents a true picture of what students' felt about the quality of the EAP course.

When asked to indicate how they would rate their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills on the scale: excellent, very good, good and weak, student respondents made the following ratings as depicted in Table D4.1-4 under Appendix D. Results from the table show that majority of the students rate their communication skills as excellent; a good indication that the objectives of the EAP course at the Wa Polytechnic were being achieved. Their teachers, however, seemed to disagree with them on this claim. They pointed out that students still have challenges in some of their English communication skills.

In spite of the reported persistence of these challenges, the picture presented here by the students' self-evaluation results is quite encouraging; but it would be interesting to find out what their teachers think about these claims. While 88 percent of “freshers” and 79% of the final-year students rated their reading skills as excellent, only 12 and 21% respectively said it was very good. In either cases, no respondent chose “good” or “weak” for an answer. Another interesting observation is that while most final-year students (91%) identified listening as their most improved skill, first-year students considered reading as their best (88%) skill. Speaking, listening, and writing followed in order of improvement of 75%, 73%, and 17% respectively for first-years; whereas their final-year counterparts rather saw reading, writing, and speaking as their best skills attracting 79%, 75% and 67% respectively. The persistence of deficiencies in some skills as pointed out by their lecturers was confirmed by these results as three percent of final-year students admitted being weak in writing and listening.

On the achievement of quality objectives in Wa Poly, the lecturers interviewed rated the extent of achievement differently. While one rated it as very good; the other put it above average (“*between 50 and 65 %*”). The third respondent conceded: “*I cannot say exactly for sure the*

degree.” The study further sought to establish from the teachers some of the major weakness they observed in majority of their learners at the beginning of the EAP course. In response, they identified poor writing skills (especially mechanics), spelling, grammar, tenses, and paragraphing as the major course-initial challenges of students.

Overall

“Excellence” is the ultimate target that the institution seeks to attain in its commitment to assuring quality. For majority of EAP learners involved in this study to have claimed that they have acquired excellent communication and linguistic skills since taking the course should be gratifying indeed; as it also indicates the achievement of the broad quality objectives of Wa Poly and the EAP course objectives in particular. However, the fact that their teachers expressed doubt about students’ claims makes the results quite interesting but not surprising. It is the view of this researcher that this is another dimension of the claim in the QA literature that “quality” is like ‘beauty’ that lies in the eye of the beholder” (Mishra, 2006:11). The student perception of “excellence” may vary from the teacher’s. As experts in the subject, it is natural that the teacher’s worldview of quality would be different from that of the students’. As debatable as this may be, there is still the need for some convergence criteria for both teacher and learner to agree on what really constitutes quality (“excellence”), hence, the need for subject standards to serve as benchmarks. As Mishra (2006:13) aptly points out, “In higher education, our objective is to achieve the ‘standard’ and move towards ‘excellence.’ ”

4.1.6 Respondents’ Perspective on a “Good Teacher”

To allow for a more neutral and objective assessment of teachers, questions relating to the assessment were limited to the students and the managers. The broad categories of students’ and administrators’ responses were subsequently coded and analysed under: 1. course presentation; 2. teacher’s general demeanour in class; 3. mode of delivery and 4. pedagogy. Responses from the two selected categories of participants are discussed in turn, beginning with the student view on what makes a “good teacher”.

To ascertain from Wa Poly students what their views were about a “good teacher”, the survey participants were given the opportunity to identify attributes they considered as qualities of a “good teacher.” The same question was deliberately posed twice to the students and positioned at the beginning and at the end of the questionnaires. The idea was to establish from the learners

what attributes they considered most essential and desirable of a good teacher through their recurrence in the responses. Table D4.1-5 in Appendix D presents a summary of how the learners rated the attributes.

From the statistics, 87 students representing 63 % of the respondents rated teachers' general demeanour in class as the most desirable attribute. This was followed in importance by pedagogical skills which 31 (22.5%) of the respondents considered important. How the course is presented drew 16 responses constituting 11.6% of the respondents, with mode of delivery attracting only four responses (2.9%) to be the lowest-rated quality. As to what helps them determine a "good teacher", the respondents rated student performance and pedagogy equally as determinants. It can be deduced from the results that the students consider all the identified qualities as important; but value a positive bearing of the teacher in class and pedagogy most.

On whether their EAP teachers exhibited these qualities or not, the students gave a positive assessment of their lecturers. The results showed that 122 students (representing an 88.4% majority) responded in the affirmative with 8% objecting to this assertion. Those who were unsure represented only 3.6% of the total number of respondents. A "good teacher" is indispensable in the institution's quest for quality learning experience. For the students to have rated their teachers that high (88.4%) meant that a key ingredient for achieving 'high quality' learning experience at Wa Poly was in place.

The three-credit EAP course at Wa Poly is handled by three teachers, all of whom had Masters in English Language or Language Education at the time of fieldwork for this study. Table D4.1-6 in Appendix D provides some details on their experiences in tertiary level teaching. The results show that all the three course teachers were of the rank of lecturer, with an average of 13 years' experience in tertiary-level teaching. In a young institution like Wa Poly, this was quite an impressive record of teaching experience and gives a boost to EAP teaching and learning; especially when student participants in the survey identify experience as a vital attribute of their 'ideal' teacher. It was however surprising that with such a level of experience, none of the teachers had attained the status of senior lecturer, a situation that raises questions about their activeness in research and publication activities which constitute the main promotion criteria in academia.

The same question that was put to the learners was posed during the interview with the managers. The managers of Wa Polytechnic shared the views of their students on the attributes of a “good teacher” as they opined that “a good teacher” is one who 1) is able to live up to the mandate of the institution and respond to the needs of the students; 2) has the patience to be able to explain clearly to the understanding of the students, and also 3) takes the extra responsibility to mentor the students. On how a good teacher can be determined, the administrators cited the feedback and reactions of students either verbally or through surveys and learning outcomes as useful measuring rods.

Overall

The results generally show that the students and their managers shared views on some qualities, but not on others. For instance, the managers agreed with the students on the need for a “good teacher” to be patient, clear, and able to teach to the understanding of learners. The two groups of participants also agreed on positive learning outcomes or good student and graduate performance as possible criteria for determining teacher quality. Placed in the wider context of QA, the results confirm earlier assertions by the UNESCO and UNICEF (discussed under 2.2.2.1 and 2.4). In the context of this study, a good teacher is seen as one who skillfully blends mastery of the course with excellent pedagogy and the right demeanour in class to deliver quality tuition for positive learning outcomes. The importance of the teacher’s role in guaranteeing quality in schools has long been acknowledged by UNICEF. The Fund observed an interesting paradigm shift from the earlier emphasis on “system inputs like infrastructure and pupil-teacher ratios, and on curricular content” to the current paying of more attention to ‘educational processes’ where teachers and administrators are rather interested in arriving at worthwhile learner experiences (UNICEF 2000: 13). Citing Darling-Hammond (1997), UNICEF agreed that “[t]he highest quality teachers, those most capable of helping their students learn, have deep mastery of both subject matter and pedagogy.” This stance was corroborated by Wa Poly student respondents, who cited erudition and mastery of subject matter as some of the key attributes of a “good teacher”. They also identified punctuality, regularity in class, good self-expression, patience and approachability as some other personal qualities that a good teacher should exhibit

4.1.7 Perspectives on the Conduciveness of the Learning Environment

Generally, the assessment of the conduciveness of the atmosphere for teaching and learning atmosphere in Wa Poly was considered from two main fronts: 1) the physical environment, and

2) the ‘social climate’ and general ambient factors. Views of participants are discussed in turn below, beginning with students.

Results of this survey show that the students consider the conduciveness of the teaching and learning environment very crucial in assuring quality in teaching learning. This is portrayed in the results presented in Table D4.1-7 of Appendix D. of the 138 respondents, 85 (representing the majority of 61.6%) expressed satisfaction with the conduciveness of their current learning environment. While 35.5% disagreed to this claim; the remaining 2.9% expressed uncertainty. This generally positive assessment of the learning environment affirms the realisation of the polytechnic’s quality objective of providing a favourable general environment needed for the effective engagement of students and staff in a productive education process by ensuring that:

- its physical infrastructure sufficiently supports the core mission activities of teaching/learning, research and provision of services to the public;
- reasonably good and accessible social services are made available to students and staff;
- students’ learning is continually enhanced through constant adoption of the latest innovations in education and technology and in the professional field of pedagogy.

(Wa Polytechnic, 2011: 13)

It is observable from statistics cited earlier in this study that there is a good staff-student ratio, which in itself is conducive to quality education. On the frequency of EAP lectures per week, Wa Poly students said they receive tuition only once a week; a situation they and their lecturers conceded was not good enough. Asked whether they had other opportunities to meet their teachers for help relating to their EAP studies outside regular lecture sessions, majority (60%) of the students answered in the affirmative; with the remaining 40% responding to the contrary (Not displayed on table). Thus, taking into account the shortfall in contact hours for EAP, extra tutorials could supplement the deficit in regular EAP lessons per week considerably and should therefore be given serious consideration.

Other general factors considered needful by the students for quality learning experience include the availability of quality learning materials and facilities like a well-stocked library, current and

relevant reference materials, and a reliable internet service. To measure the level of students' satisfaction with existing library facilities at Wa Poly, students were asked to assess existing facilities and services at the polytechnic library. The results showed that over half of the total number of respondents (50.7%) rates the facilities as satisfactory; 16.7% say they are very satisfactory; 29.7% feel they are less satisfactory, with 2.9% expressing uncertainty. On the availability of relevant EAP reference materials at the library, students expressed varied views. While 24.6% of them felt the materials were very adequate; 38.4% said they were adequate; and 37% felt they were not. The students were also divided on how up-to-date these materials were. They observed that materials published in 2012 constituted 2.9%, with those published in 2011 accounting for 8%. Publications for 2010 and 2009 accounted for 8.7% and 37.7% respectively; whereas those dating back some three years or more (described as "others") constituted 42.8%. From the responses, it is evident that majority (80.5%, i.e. 42.8+37.7) of the Wa Poly students felt that available EAP reading materials at the library were not current enough. This view was shared by their teachers, who also felt that even though EAP-related materials were available at the library, they were not up-to-date, citing 2006 as the latest date of publication.

On alternative sources of relevant information, the students said they also obtained relevant information on EAP from: 1) lecture notes (74.6%); 2) textbooks (13%); 3) internet (6.5%), and 4) public library (2.9%). The results (not displayed in tables) show that majority of the students relied on lecture notes as their main source of information, a situation that is quite disturbing as it has the high potential of encouraging rote learning.

The internet has come to stay as an integral part of teaching, learning, and management in modern higher education. However, according to Wa Poly student respondents, internet service is currently unavailable at the polytechnic library. The survey however showed that most (68%) of the students were able to source information online; meaning the internet could be a useful alternative source of current information on EAP. Regrettably, the only available source of internet on campus for students is the computer laboratory which is temporarily housed in the administration block and can seat only 100 at a time. Students are only allowed into the laboratory during computer literacy lessons. Consequently, most of them resort to either patronising private internet cafés in town or using modems after lectures.

On whether the atmosphere for teaching and learning EAP at Wa Poly was conducive enough or not, only one of the three respondents agreed. As to how the situation could be improved, one of them suggested:

English/Communication Skills should be taken for at least 2 yrs in all programmes; the credit for Com. Skills, Secretarial English, and Business Communication should be raised to 3; entry requirements should make a credit in English a must.

The other emphasised the need to encourage the speaking of English among students. With majority of students coming from the same ethnic groups, there is always the tendency to speak their L1s after the English lessons. On whether they had enough reference material for the course, two of the teachers responded in the affirmative and went on to confirm that they were also available in the library. The third expressed some reservations saying: “*Not exactly.*” Asked how they got materials for teaching and research, all the lecturers who were interviewed cited their personal libraries as the prime source followed by the polytechnic library. They also mentioned the Internet and other sources as the third and fourth alternatives.

Unlike the students and their teachers, the administrators were not asked specific question on the conduciveness of the learning environment at Wa Poly. Theirs were more general in nature and dealt with specific quality issues that had the potential to enhance the conduciveness of the learning environment. On whether the structure of the institution supported the functioning of teams, and whether team review was a feature of the working process, the managers affirmed the existence of both mechanisms at Wa Poly. They also asserted the existence of internal mechanisms for self-evaluation and external processes for regular inspection of the polytechnic, all aimed at ensuring a congenial learning atmosphere. Both of them agreed that action is taken in response to the outcomes of the self-evaluation. Their unanimity sharply contrasted that of their academic counterparts, one of whom vehemently expressed disagreement saying: “*Frankly there is no evaluation mechanism here. At least, I am not aware of any teaching evaluation tools.*”

Overall

Typical of quality issues, opinions expressed by respondents on the conduciveness of the learning environment at Wa Poly were varied. Overall, majority of participants from all the three

groups involved in this study agreed on the conduciveness of the general learning environment of the polytechnic. Despite the disagreements, it is evident from the results that the administrators were the only group involved in this study who seemed to totally affirm the conduciveness of the learning environment, given that all the necessary mechanisms (except for the full operationalisation of the QA Unit) were in place to ensure its realisation. What the study found rather surprising was that the teachers were more vociferous in expressing dissatisfaction with the learning environment than learners who are noted for being more prone to that; sometimes going to the extent of embarking on demonstrations to register their dissatisfaction with the quality of academic facilities. The complaints that came from the students and their teachers bordered more on the availability and quality of available teaching and learning materials and general ambient factors. Much was not heard about the conduciveness of the physical learning environment though; an indication that it was more satisfactory. The conduciveness of the physical learning environment can be attributed to the late establishment of Wa Poly. Unlike the older polytechnics which inherited some existing infrastructure from erstwhile technical institutes, Wa Poly was built from scratch. Though the polytechnic is yet to acquire the full complement of relevant physical infrastructure, all completed buildings are modern and well ventilated. With funding from the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETfund) and the Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF) some basic infrastructure and equipment have been provided for teaching and learning.

Situating these findings within the context of the quality literature, three publications lend themselves for reference: the Grundtvig Learning Partnership Report (2009-2011), UNICEF (2000), and Jago and Tanner's literature review for the University of Georgia in 1999. According to the European Commission's Grundtvig Learning Partnership report, "[q]uality assurance tools in themselves only lead to better language teaching and learning if they are used well" (EC, 2011:21). There is therefore the need to maintain a balance between a "conductive" learning environment and the utilisation of "quality assurance" tools. Such tools must also be suitable ('fit') for the realisation of the institution's objectives (Ibid). UNICEF (2000: 7) on its part has argued that "[l]earning can occur anywhere, but the positive learning outcomes generally sought by educational systems happen in quality learning environments." Three key elements are identified as constituting a typical learning environment. These are: physical, psychosocial and

service delivery elements. The quality of teaching and learning depends on the quality of these elements. What this implies is that the learning environment extends beyond just the physical elements to include what is termed the “social climate”. Within the context of Wa Poly, the responses of participants could generally be interpreted as a positive assessment of the institution’s effort at attaining quality teaching and learning in spite of structural challenges.

4.1.8 Assessing the EAP Curriculum

Skills that learners are expected to acquire by the end of taking a particular course are usually spelt out as objectives in the curriculum for the attention of the teacher, the learner, and the assessor. In measuring the quality of a course then, it is important to take into account its objectives as they constitute the benchmarks for the assessment. The three main stakeholders in this – teachers, students, and managers were thus asked to appraise the existing EAP curriculum in use in their institution.

In assessing the comprehensiveness of the existing EAP curriculum 78.3% of the students said the content of the EAP curriculum was comprehensive enough, while in the view of 18.8%, it was not. Those who were unsure constituted only 2.9%. Although majority of students agreed to the comprehensiveness of the existing curriculum, they also believed there was still room for improvement. Respondents who advocated the review suggested the introduction of the following areas in case of a possible review and justified their proposals accordingly as:

- General knowledge (72.5%): In view of globalisation and current trends, it is important that the scope of the EAP curriculum is broadened to equip students with a broader worldview.
- Basic communication (20.3%): Introducing basic communication into the curriculum would help learners understand basic communication theories and how they can be applied to EAP.
- Syntax, usage, and phonetics (7.2%): The student respondents consider grammar as the bedrock of usage and enhanced communication skills. It is also seen as the mainstay of remediation of the poor foundation many learners had in the language. With phonetics, they can be helped to get over their pronunciation and spelling problems which are linked to their ethnic backgrounds and L1s.

Interestingly, most of the areas that the students identified like syntax, usage, and phonetics were also cited by their teachers. What was a bit intriguing about the results though was the apparently low response rate on the need to include the three areas – syntax and phonetics, seeing that the teachers as well as their students identified these as major areas needing extra intervention. On whether some topics should be excluded from the new curriculum or not, most student respondents disagreed, arguing that all of them were important. The few who supported the exclusion stance identified: *“résumés, and components of communication.* A respondent justified the exclusion arguing: *“Issues that are outmoded in recent days should be removed; and e.g. new ways of writing CVs introduced.”* Another respondent observed that some of the topics in the existing EAP curriculum overlapped others in the other English-related course and therefore should be merged; a view that was supported by one of the lecturers.

On the scope and relevance of the content of the existing EAP curriculum to student needs, only one of the three interviewees responded in the affirmative with the other two disagreeing. They disclosed that the curriculum, which was developed over a decade ago (October, 2001), is yet to see any major review. In spite of the apparent disagreements, all the teachers felt that the curriculum needed to be reviewed. On which new areas they would recommend for inclusion in a new curriculum if the current one were to be reviewed, the lecturers recommended the following:

- spoken English tasks, an hour a week;
- extensive reading tasks;
- creative/essay/technical writing and critiquing
- approach to comprehension,
- summary writing
- grammar and mechanics, especially spelling techniques, parallel structure, and word formation
- current affairs, e.g. petroleum industry

When asked to identify topics in the current curriculum deemed less relevant and should be left out in the event of a review, the only respondent to the question cited “Job Search”, a topic in the Secretarial English syllabus, and said it should be a general course in final year rather than the focus of the course in the 4th semester. According to him, *“Job search is not just English.”* He

also observed that the current English/Communication courses have too many repetitive topics which overlapped. The other two participants declined to respond.

From the managers' perspective, facilitating the development and the periodic assessment of curricula to confirm the extent to which programmes were meaningfully structured and organised are very essential in assessing quality in teaching and learning. This, they observed helps to assess how far goals and learning objectives are being achieved, and represents some of the key roles of the institution in ensuring the existence of a conducive learning environment for EAP learners. Another important role of the institution in its quest for establishing a learner-friendly environment is the implementation of quality policies through educating stakeholders about the policies and offering training opportunities for teachers so they can apply quality tools. Their responses did not include specific areas for inclusion or exclusion in the curriculum the need arises for a review.

Overall

The results generally show that students and their teachers especially felt strongly that the existing EAP curriculum being used in Wa Poly should be reviewed. However, the students did not fully agree with their teachers on some of the specific areas that should be included or excluded from the new curriculum if the need arose for one. While the students felt that the curriculum was comprehensive enough; their teachers thought otherwise, as only one of them supported the student view. Questions posed to the managers did not touch on specific curriculum review issues, but rather addressed general quality issues that could contribute to the overall quality of teaching and learning environment of the polytechnic. On the recommended review of the (Communication Skills) EAP syllabus, it must be observed that the Wa Polytechnic is not the only institution using it currently. Since all the other nine polytechnics in the country make use of the same syllabus, a review anytime soon would only be possible upon receipt of similar complaints from them. This suggests the need to conduct a similar survey in other polytechnics to offer their students, teachers and managers the opportunity to assess the existing twelve-year-old curriculum and submit their recommendations to the NABPTEX, its originator and moderator.

4.1.9 Participant Views on the Relevance of Tertiary-Level English Teaching and Learning

To ascertain the uses that the EAP course was being put to at Wa Poly and to assess the quality mechanisms in place for enhancing its teaching and learning in the institution, views of students, their teachers, and managers were solicited. Their responses are discussed in turn.

The student respondents considered EAP teaching and learning at tertiary level very relevant, as a total of 99% of them affirmed its importance (not displayed on table). Reasons they gave for this included, in order of importance, 1) enhancement of basic communication and linguistic skills; 2) remediation/transition, and 3) enhancement of socio-economic opportunities like respect in society, brighter job prospects, and travel opportunities. The only respondent, who objected to the relevance of the course, argued that the main aim of tertiary-level education, especially technical and vocational education, is not “*book knowledge*” (implying academic), but “*technical knowledge*” (i.e. hands-on training).

On the relevance of English teaching and learning at tertiary level the three subject lecturers who were interviewed unanimously asserted its crucial role in ensuring effective communication and, as one of them put it: “*in remedying the deficiency in English language usage at higher academic/professional levels to enable Ghanaians fit into the global scheme of affairs.*” All the three lecturers admitted noticing some improvements in their learners’ English language communication skills since they started taking the EAP course, but said some still manifested specific weaknesses in various areas. Poor spelling, tenses, grammar, and writing (particularly poor paragraphing) were identified as the major weaknesses of majority of learners at the beginning of the course. They also identified, in particular, grammar, spelling, writing, speaking, and vocabulary as areas most affected by sociolinguistic factors emanating from learners’ L1. Their observation had some interesting similarities with the results of a similar study conducted by Evans and Green to re-visit Hyland’s question on whether EAP was necessary (Hyland, 1997). The research aimed at exploring the linguistic challenges of students at Hong-Kong’s largest English-medium university whose L1 was Cantonese. The survey, which covered nearly 5000 undergraduates from the university, was one of the largest surveys ever undertaken in the field of EAP research in terms of the number of student participants. Their findings have some interesting similarities with those of this study: Like in this case study, they also found that academic writing (especially style, grammar, and cohesion) and academic speaking (grammar,

fluency, and pronunciation in particular) constituted major problems for the subjects. They also discovered that the general “receptive” and “productive” vocabularies of students were rather low and that their academic listening skills apparently posed “fewer difficulties than writing, speaking and reading” (Evans and Green, 2007: 3).

Though their non-academic colleagues – the managers were not asked a direct question on the relevance of EAP, their responses to questions on quality assurance and how it relates to EAP teaching and learning affirmed their support to this view. Their assertion that the culture of their institution was influenced by “*the acquisition of relevant knowledge, its application to industry and service to the community*” certainly holds true for quality EAP learning as well. Similarly, their identification of the periodic review of academic programmes as well as the assessment of the extent to which goals and learning objectives were being achieved constituted an acknowledgement of the direct impact of QA on English language teaching at Wa Poly. The two, both of whom had Masters in their chosen fields (one in Education Management and the other in Planning) at the time of data collection for this study, had been working in the tertiary educational environment for an average duration of 4.5 years. As a young institution whose quality culture is yet to take roots, the availability of experienced managers and teachers would contribute greatly to the actualization of Wa Poly’s culture.

Overall

The study noted that though a young institution, Wa Poly had good teacher-student ratio which in itself augurs well for quality EAP teaching and learning. The teachers and their administrative colleagues also had a fairly impressive wealth of experience in their various areas of expertise; a quality the learners felt was crucial for the realisation of “high quality” teaching in the institution. While the administrators acknowledged the relevance of QA principles to EAP teaching and learning in general; the lecturers specifically observed that not only does quality EAP teaching and learning ensure effective communication, but it also plays a key role in remediation and in enhancing the academic and professional skills of students to be able compete effectively locally and globally. Sharing the standpoint of their teachers, student participants also acknowledged the enhancement of their academic communication and the socio-economic prospects that the teaching of EAP at tertiary level can bring them.

4.1.10 Observed Challenges to QA Implementation at Wa Poly

The study observed that although a QA Unit had been established at the Wa Polytechnic, it was yet to be fully operational. In the interim, the Planning Unit was playing a care-taker role, but not all stakeholders seemed to be aware or actively involved in the design and of quality models in the institution. A section of the teaching staff also seemed to be dissatisfied with the supervisory roles of one of the key external QA agents of the institution, describing some of its moderation procedures as “*flawed*”. Quality assurance thrives on teamwork, and all actors must be seen to be working together towards a common goal. It is therefore important the causes of the dissatisfaction are investigated and resolved for quality enhancement. As far as quality in language teaching was concerned, one of the major challenges observed hinged on the socio-cultural backgrounds of learners. With majority (85%) of Wa Poly students coming from the region where the polytechnic is located, vernacular speaking among learners was common and posed a major challenge to quality EAP teaching and learning. This, learners and their teachers attested, affects their spoken and written English, especially, spelling, grammar, and construction. This situation is further aggravated by the nonexistence of hostel facilities on Wa Poly campus. The opportunity of living together in a hostel, where heterogeneity could encourage the speaking of English with peers from other parts of the country that cannot speak Dagaare, Sisaalii, or Waalii, (the major languages spoken in the Upper West Region), and thus help improve upon students’ spoken English skills is lost. Organising on-campus social functions and extra-curricular activities to provide more opportunities for students to interact using English are also not possible because of the lack of hostels (4.1.1). The distance from the Wa Poly campus to the town centre, where most students live; and the darkness at night due to the absence of street lighting on campus, are also contributing factors. Though there are some reference materials on EAP, learners and their teachers thought they were a bit obsolete and called for the acquisition of new stocks. The availability of campus-wide internet connectivity would have provided an alternative source of relevant and supplementary information on EAP, but the research revealed that current internet connectivity is limited to the administration block. Insufficient contact hours and short course duration for the EAP course also constituted major sources of worry to both students and teachers, as either category of participants indicated dissatisfaction with the existing arrangement of two hours per week for two semesters.

4.1.11 QA Practices and Language Learning Approaches Considered Unique to Wa Poly

One of the main objectives of this study has been to identify some of the QA practices and language learning approaches that are considered unique to the case institutions involved in the survey and to recommend them for replication elsewhere. All three categories of participants were thus asked questions relating to these areas (but framed differently) and their responses discussed (Appendix B). The recommendations below, though by no means exhaustive or entirely ‘unique’, are considered significant for the enhancement of quality in EAP teaching and learning not only in the case institution, but also worthy of replication in institutions of like mission.

On the common aspects of quality English language teaching for their institution that they would like to recommend to other institutions, Wa Polytechnic respondents proposed the following mechanisms portrayed in Table 4.1-8 under Appendix D. Majority (27.5%) of the students identified pedagogy as the key factor in delivering quality EAP tuition. Quality pedagogy, in their view, should take into account an effective and regular mode of assessment. EAP lectures must be interactive and practical in nature. Teachers must also ensure that methodologies are varied when the need arises, and not stick to just one approach. They should endeavour to simplify language learning by making it fun. Study tours should also be organised periodically to give learners an opportunity to experience what actually happens in the world of work. Performance enhancement tools like the provision of relevant teaching and learning materials were rated second in importance by students. Teachers handling the EAP course, the students recommended, must also be qualified and experienced. Above all, there must be effective monitoring and supervision. Ensuring quality course presentation and putting in place policies that require pre-course orientation and compulsion of EAP and English for Specific (ESP) was recommended by a third (23.2%) of respondents. Over a fourth (14.5%) advocated a mode of delivery that would emphasize the teaching of grammar, writing and spelling while taking into account dialogue and discussions during tutorials where speaking and oral presentation would be encouraged. They also recommended the use of ICTs in teaching. Lecturer’s bearing in class attracted the least number of respondents here (8.7%). This should nonetheless be considered least important. It would be recalled that student respondents rated this as one of the most desirable attributes of the EAP teacher when they were asked to describe their ideal teacher

earlier. They recommended that the EAP teacher must be someone who encourages learners and relates well with them.

All but one of the Wa Poly EAP teachers affirmed the conduciveness of the atmosphere for teaching the course in the institution. Their suggestions for further improvement of the teaching environment are worth recommending to other institutions where the course is taught. In agreement with their students, the EAP teachers recommend that the English/Communication Skills course should be taken for, at least, two years in all programmes and that the credit for Communication Skills should be raised to three. The institution should also insist on a credit (C6 or better) in English as an entry requirement for all applicants. The speaking of English among students, they recommended, should be encouraged too. This particular recommendation stems from the observation made earlier in Chapter 1 on how, for socio-cultural reasons, many Ghanaian students feel more comfortable chatting with colleagues in their L1 or the prestige language spoken in the area where the institution is located.

To achieve quality EAP tuition, the teachers also recommended “*a combination of progressive methodology and the latest teaching and learning materials in activity-centred classes and field interaction.*” They advised that there should also be effectiveness in teaching and learning to ensure good standards or quality output. To achieve this in English language learning in particular, the teachers suggested that language laboratory facilities must be provided as “*a substitute for native English community*”. There must also be an application of good teaching methodologies to meet the needs and aspirations of the learner, while observing high standards for the teaching and learning of English.

In the view of the managers, achieving quality in teaching and learning requires the existence of an effective inspection scheme that reflects more adequately the various aspects of quality teaching and learning. There must also be the preparation of course outlines and objectives to serve as subject standards for effective delivery. The existing inspection scheme, they recommended, should be broadened to include the review or appraisal of reports on tracer studies of the institution.

4.1.12 Conclusion

Three main conclusions can be drawn from this case study: First, majority of the respondents attested to the relevance of teaching English language at tertiary level in Ghana. Because of the socio-economic importance of EAP teaching and learning to the key actors in higher education, there is the need to put in place efficient and effective quality assurance mechanisms to enhance its teaching. Although, to a very large extent, both internal and external quality assurance systems were in place at the Wa Polytechnic, respondents felt there still was room for improvement. Second, the socio-ethnic backgrounds of learners could also impact their language learning negatively, especially in the areas of grammar, mechanics, reading, writing, and speaking. Third, besides the quality of the physical learning environment, learners also considered general ambient factors as crucial in guaranteeing a rewarding learning experience. The implications of this research for managers and teachers, especially EAP lecturers, are that the quality concerns of learners be taken note of so that academic and administrative issues can be tailored to fit the purposes for which they were designed and to afford students and/or their parents (“customers”) value for their money.

4.2 Case HEI II: University for Development Studies (UDS)

A sample of size of 154 comprising 150 students, two administrators, and two course lecturers from the Wa campus of UDS was selected for this study. They included the following:

- An Assistant Registrar (General Administration)
- A Faculty Officer (Assistant Registrar, Academic Affairs)
- Two Communication Skills/English Language Lecturers
- Students from the Faculty of Integrated Development Studies, Faculty of Planning and Land Management, and the Faculty of Education, Law and Business Studies.

The opinions of the academic and administrative staff were solicited largely through open-ended and structured interviews, while those of students (94%) were sought using the survey method. Details of the data collection process are discussed under 3.2.3.

4.2.1 Background and Context

The UDS was established some 20 years ago (1992) as the fifth public university in Ghana. Currently, the university has about 20,000 students and operates a multi-campus system with four satellite campuses strategically distributed over the three regions of northern Ghana. These campuses are located at Nyankpala and Tamale in the Northern, Navrongo in the Upper East, and Wa in the Upper West regions (UDS, 2011a). The Wa campus, where this study took place, has the largest student population of 12,349 enrolled in various academic departments under the Faculties of Integrated Development Studies; Planning and Land Management; and Education, Law and Business Studies. Like all higher educational institutions in Ghana, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), locally termed Language and Communication Skills is compulsory for all first-year students. In the UDS, however, the course is taken for only one trimester.

The current staff strength of UDS, Wa Campus is about 200, comprising academic, management and support staff. The campus is sited on a 5.417 sqmls land, south of the Wa municipality along the main Wa – Accra highway. The university has a huge physical infrastructural deficit in terms of classroom, staff and students' accommodation. A substantial portion of academic and administrative work is still carried out in borrowed or rented premises at different locations in the Wa municipality. The few major completed buildings on the permanent campus at Bamahu include a lecture hall complex, five students' hostels, and an auditorium which also serves as a

lecture theatre and temporary offices for deans and the registry. Of the 12,349 students, only 719 (six percent) are resident on campus. The rest of the students stay in private hostels and rented apartments in the Bamahu and Wa townships and are conveyed daily by buses to and from the campus and other lecture venues in the town for lectures. A modern library complex and other building projects are currently under construction. (Details on distance, population and weather are same as under Section 4.1.1).

4.2.2 UDS: Mission and Strategy

Like all institutions of higher learning, the UDS has a vision, mission and the relevant strategy for the realisation of its objectives. The university envisions becoming “the home of world-class pro-poor scholarship.” To achieve this vision, the UDS has set itself the task of:

1. promoting equitable and socioeconomic transformation of communities through practically-oriented, community based, problem solving, gender sensitive and interactive research, teaching, learning and outreach activities;
 2. providing higher education to persons suitably qualified for and capable of benefitting from it;
 3. positioning itself as a national asset in the facilitation of lifelong learning;
 4. developing its information and communication technology infrastructure as the driving force for the education of more people, more rapidly and the improvement of efficiency and academic quality in order to advance community and national development.
- (University for Development Studies, 2002; 2011: 2)

The broad objectives of UDS cited above are based on the Act (PNDC Law 279, 1992) establishing it, which mandates it to:

... provide practical training in the subjects taught, particularly subjects which are related to agriculture, social sciences, economics, health, environment and culture and shall in the training use and apply on material available in the north of Ghana in particular and the country in general (Government of Ghana, 1992).

These provisions explain the UDS’ unique mode of doing things, rather dissimilar to the practice in other public universities in Ghana. All disciplines have their curricula designed taking into account the practical needs and concerns of communities in the university’s catchment areas.

Similarly, its pedagogical style aims at equipping students with the necessary academic and practical skills that will enable them effectively address development and poverty-related issues in communities (UDS, 2011). Thus, determining whether the university is accomplishing its set objectives or not would depend on assessing how much of its declared mission and objectives are being realised. Similarly, the quality of teaching and learning at UDS is determinable by how it can contribute to the realisation of the university's broad aims of combining academic programmes with practical training.

Factors influencing UDS' culture

The UDS has a unique culture founded upon an educational philosophy and pedagogical style that could be described as a departure from the norms of the conventional university. It is the only public university in Ghana that currently runs the trimester system. Such an arrangement affords students the opportunity to spend two terms on campus and a third in the field for civic engagement under its flagship Third Trimester Field Practical Programme (TTFPP). Cumulatively, students do approximately one year of fieldwork by the end of their four years training (Kaborise, 2003). This affirms its uniqueness as the only university in the country mandated "to break with tradition and identify itself with the 'realities of the predominantly rural societies' (Ibid.). To determine factors affecting the culture of UDS from insiders, views of some managers of the institution were sought. This choice was only available in the administrators' interview. They pointed out that the culture of UDS is enshrined in its motto: "Knowledge for service." On what influences the culture of the institution, they observed that UDS's culture is influenced foremost by "external expectations", expertise of staff, and also by quality assessments and examination results. This affirms the university's commitment to achieving quality student outcomes through offering equal opportunity to all learners to succeed. Some of the systems and processes put in place for the realisation of these objectives, according to the managers, include its unique training philosophy of blending academic knowledge with community development skills and setting standards by which quality can be determined. These standards include the ability of students to apply knowledge acquired in "community entry, community dialogue, extension and practical tools of inquiry" by the end of their training. To effectively carry out these activities and subsequently produce reports on their findings, students need excellent linguistic skills in English; good grammar and usage; and enhanced writing skills. The Communication Skills (EAP) course was thus designed having these standards in mind.

Assessing the quality of teaching and learning EAP at UDS would therefore depend on the extent to which these specific objectives of the course have been met within the context of the broader quality assurance framework of the university through the lenses of its three principal actors: students, teachers and the institution (managers).

4.2.3 Implementing QA for Quality at UDS

“Quality” in the context of UDS is regarded as the pursuance of excellence in teaching, research and provision of service to community “as well as helping achieve UDS’ vision of advancing knowledge for service for sustainable development” (UDS, 2011b). As a means of realising its vision of advancing knowledge for service for sustainable development, a quality assurance unit was set up in 2008 to coordinate quality management activities of the university. Internally, UDS has in place QA systems for student admissions, teaching and assessment as well as the recruitment and retention of staff. Prospective students applying for admission to the university are expected to possess the requisite qualifications laid down by the National Council for Tertiary Education and the Accreditation Board. Similarly, applicants for positions in the academic and administrative sectors must possess the requisite qualifications and must successfully go through an interview before they can be employed. The UDS Law (PNDCL 279, 1992) and its Statutes mandate relevant committees and boards like the Executive Committee, Academic Board, School Boards and committees responsible for admissions, examinations and discipline to work in their various and collective capacities to ensure that academic activities in the institution are fit for the purposes for which they are being run and that clients get value for their money. Quality in EAP teaching and learning at UDS is assured through the application of existing general quality principles of the university as well as abiding by subject standards and objectives of the course which serve as benchmarks. The university is also subject to external QA regimes overseen by state-funded supervisory and regulatory bodies like the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) and the National Accreditation Board (NAB) which are responsible for programme and institutional accreditation. Staff and students taking professional examinations that are not directly overseen by these bodies are required to abide by quality standards set by the relevant professional bodies (1.2.2).

Participant Perspectives on Quality Assurance and Control Processes at UDS

Participants were asked to identify tools used in the assessment and evaluation process, and identify mechanisms used for effective quality control and implementation at UDS. Table E4.2-1

of Appendix E illustrates the views of UDS student respondents on tools used for evaluating good teaching in the institution. The statistics show that over half (51.1%) of the respondents identify the observation of teachers' bearing in class and their pedagogical skills as the most frequently used assessment tool. Next in importance to this tool is periodic assessment or appraisal, which attracted 35.5% of responses. Those who expressed uncertainty about evaluation tools used at UDS constituted 13.5% of the population.

Interestingly, the teachers agreed with their students on all but one of these opinions. They confirmed assessing students' progress in writing skills, grammar, vocabulary, and other language mechanics through take-home assignments, class exercises, and end of semester examinations. On the evaluation of lecturers, the interviewees expressed varied opinions: While one of the lecturers admitted that students evaluated lecturers through oral testimonies; the other disagreed, saying: “[T]eaching practice is not evaluated in this institution.”

The managers also attested to the existence of a system for self-evaluation involving the QA Unit as well as mentorship. As regards individual and institutional level involvement, they identified the QA Unit and students as being responsible for institutional and individual level self-evaluations respectively. Very senior members of the university are also looked up to by the young and not-too-experienced lecturers for mentorship at the individual level. Other internal mechanisms mentioned by the administrators included the university's practice of tying lecturers' promotion to publication, and having students assess teachers at the end of the trimester. Besides the above internal QA systems, the administrators also cited external mechanisms such as quality audits conducted to inspect and evaluate institutional capacities in the areas of physical infrastructure like teaching and learning facilities (such as hostels, library etc.), human resources, and academic activities. On the impact of the pre- and post-inspection processes on UDS, the managers observed that in addition to “*putting management on their toes to improve upon facilities*”, these processes also make lecturers “sit up” to deliver high quality tuition. They also observed that the inspection processes help lecturers to better appreciate students' expectation. Another interesting observation the managers made was that the pre- and post-inspection processes likewise put pressure on government to increase its financial allocation to the university.

Overall, besides the one academic who refuted the evaluation of teaching practice in UDS, all participants affirmed the existence of various quality assurance tools in the institution. A possible interpretation of the contrasting views on quality implementation at UDS could be a manifestation of procedural drawbacks in the dissemination of QA models such that all key players are aware of them and contribute to their development.

Applying Quality Principles for Effective Teaching and Learning of EAP

To assess how QA principles are applied to ensure effective EAP teaching and learning in UDS, this study sought to establish from the learners the state of their EAP learning experience by rating the gap between what they were expecting in the language and communication course and what their actual experiences were at the time of data collection for this study. A correlation analysis was employed to determine whether students' expectations in the EAP course had been met. This is illustrated in Table E4.2-2 in Appendix E. The results show that a positive correlation coefficient of 14.4% exists between their expectations and the skills acquired from taking the course. This correlation suggests that the delivery of the course meets stakeholders' demand for value for money. However, the correlation coefficient was low and not statistically significant.

Standards serving as benchmarks for EAP teaching and learning at UDS

Generally, the two-credit EAP (GEN 101) course at UDS aims at assisting students to improve upon their skills and competencies in English as “a working tool for other courses of study.” The university acknowledges that strong linguistic skills can help students in their working lives especially in industry and development work. Specifically, the course aims at achieving the following objectives:

- Improving the linguistic skills of students
- Polishing students' English grammar and usage
- Enhancing the students' writing skills.

To assess the extent of the achievement of these objectives, views of participants in the survey were sought and are discussed in turn.

Participant perspectives on standards serving as benchmarks

As the major clients of higher education, it was deemed appropriate to sample views of students on the application of QA principles to language teaching. Survey participants were asked to identify the various approaches in their institution that assure quality language teaching. Table E4.2-3 of Appendix E presents a summary of their responses. Existing steps and processes adopted by the university to ensure quality language teaching attracted majority (61.7%) of the responses. By “steps and processes”, the students implied:

- making language learning fun;
- ensuring that topics are relevant and applicable;
- encouraging reading and listening;
- providing quality teaching and learning materials and other resources;
- pedagogy;
- appointing professionals and permanent lecturers and
- allotting extra contact hours to teaching the course.

Relevant tools with the potential of enhancing quality in the learning of EAP were identified as the next in importance for making sure that learners get value for their money, attracting 17.1% of responses. These instruments, in the view of the respondents, connote the use of quizzes to assess learners; observing teacher performance or adopting questionnaires or surveys to assess them; and encouraging staff training and retraining. Maintaining and ensuring the effective application of existing quality standards drew 16.3% of the responses. Students who were unsure of quality mechanisms that should be adopted for enhanced language teaching constituted only 5%.

Lecturers interviewed at UDS identified good writing skills, comprehension of written English literature and oral English skills as subject standards that serve as benchmarks for EAP teaching and learning in the university. Concerning the effectiveness of these mechanisms at enhancing EAP teaching in the institution, one of the participants conceded: *“They have not proven very effective.”* The other did not respond to the question. On factors determining the choice of those subject standards, a lecturer cited the ability to communicate in writing, comprehension of the written text and oral English, which are essential in working life, as responsible factors.

Obviously, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was not in use here, as none of the participants also made mention of it.

The managers on their par identified the following provisions as quality policies directly impacting the teaching and learning of EAP at UDS, the managers identified the following provisions: 1) that exams are moderated internally and externally, and 2) that all first year students must be taught communication skills for first trimester, (i.e. compulsoriness of Communication Skills or English language for all first year students of the university).

Overall

Overall, none of the three categories of participants in this study cited the CEFR as a standard used in the university. It is however interesting to note that student responses reflected the broad principles of the CEFR as they covered the methods that would eventually lead to learners acquiring the requisite knowledge and skills in the subject. Responses from the course lecturers on the other hand reflected the “can-do” aspect of the CEFR as they cited good reading, writing, and speaking skills as the standards for teaching and learning EAP in UDS. While the administrators were not specific on existing subject benchmarks, they identified internal and external peer review and the compulsoriness of EAP for all first-year students as some of the QA principles in place to ensure its effective learning.

4.2.4 Respondent Perspectives on “High Quality” Teaching

As the main internal stakeholders in the teaching and learning enterprise, participants’ views on what constitute “high quality” tuition and how that can be achieved within EAP learning were sought. Their responses are discussed below, beginning with those of learners.

On what in their view constituted “high quality” teaching, the students expressed various thoughts. Table E4.2-4 under Appendix E presents a summary of their views. The statistics presented show that majority of the students (36.9%) see “high quality” tuition as achievable in English language through how effectively the course is presented. Next to course presentation in relevance is a teacher’s general demeanour during lessons. This perspective was held by 27.7% of the survey participants. How effectively and efficiently teaching is done, the judicious use of lecture period, punctuality and regularity, as well as the lecturer’s general appearance in class all

contribute to enhancement of indispensable ambience factors needed for the realisation of a rewarding learning experience for the student. The teacher's mode of delivering the course was also considered by 14.2% of participants as important in enhancing teaching quality. An effective mode of delivery, in their view, should take into account teachers' preparedness in handling the course; clarity and orderliness of presentation; assigning sufficient contact hours to the course, and ultimately enhancing learner understanding. A significant number (11.3%) of the participants from UDS identified the availability of relevant teaching and learning materials; comfortable classrooms, new technology, good lecturers, and smaller class sizes as necessary for creating a conducive learning environment. Making and implementing good language policies; whipping up learner enthusiasm, and ensuring teacher motivation were also identified as some of the necessary ingredients for creating an enabling teaching & learning environment. The least rated condition, in the view of participants, was pedagogy which attracted only 9.9 % of respondents. They identified interactivity during EAP lessons and opportunity for practice as some of the desirable elements that can contribute to the realisation of "high quality" tuition in UDS. A pedagogical style that is student-centred in nature and values quality assessment was also identified by the students as needful.

Another practice the students considered crucial in ensuring "high quality" tuition the discussion of marked scripts by their teachers. The survey results confirmed how much learners valued the practice of teachers discussing marked scripts to ensure quality EAP learning as 94.6% of them rated it as such (77.3% : "very helpful" + 17.3%: "helpful"). The remaining 5.7% did not consider it that helpful. As to whether their teachers used suggestions from the discussions to improve on future examination questions or not, most of the UDS students said they believed their teachers did. On whether they are able to meet their teachers outside regular lecture sessions to discuss issues relating to the EAP course or not, most of the students answered in the negative. They complained that their numbers simply made it impossible for such one-on-one interaction. They also pointed out that exercises involving construction or composition (which is vital for testing learners' writing skills) are reduced considerably because of time constraint and workload of teachers. On the frequency of EAP lectures per week, the students said they received tuition only once a week, which in their view, was inadequate. They thus recommended an increase in the number of contact hours and an extension of the existing course duration from one trimester to cover the entire four-year duration of their studies.

From the teachers' perspective, "high quality" tuition is: "[t]eaching which results in positive behaviour change in students. This is tuition that provides the appropriate/relevant subject content and meets students' understanding." To achieve "high quality" teaching and learning of English, they recommended the adoption of a student-centred approach to learning the language. This, they believe, can be realised if teachers of English language themselves are knowledgeable in the course; or "at least, have a first degree in English language" and adopt appropriate teaching methods. In regard to existing mechanisms for observing and getting feedback on teaching and learning activities in UDS, the lecturers contrasted each other. Whereas one respondent cited informal feedback from students as the main tool; the other said: "No formal mechanisms. There are no feedback mechanisms." They both declined to comment on who undertakes this function in the institution. On how the results of the quality control are fed back into their planning and delivery processes, one of the UDS respondents explained that, "[b]ased on feedback from students and peers, course outlines, questions and marking schemes are reviewed" but, the other chose not to comment.

To the administrators, the practice where the prime responsibility of implementing internal QA principles is vested in academic heads of department with deans doing the monitoring is key to "high quality" tuition. Organising seminars for staff involved in the process and subsequently tasking deans to supervise were also considered as contributing to "high quality" teaching. In line with efforts to achieve "high quality" tuition, teachers are also asked to list tools that will enhance their teaching, and are subsequently trained on their effective use when management procures them.

Overall

The three groups of participants in this study expressed varied opinions on what constitutes "high quality teaching." The study found that the student-centred paradigm of classroom teaching advocated by learners confirms the stance of their teachers. It affirms learners' desire to see their EAP lessons assume a more practical outlook and topics treated also being more realistic and applicable to real-life issues. The position of the UDS students on the subject suggests a desire for an active learner involvement in the search for knowledge. As far as knowledge creation and the retention of information are concerned, a student-centred learning is considered more effective because the student is required to apply the knowledge (discussed under 2.4.1). The

administrators on the other hand, were not specific on what constitutes “high quality learning.” The factors they cited were more contributory in nature than being representative of the achievement of “high quality learning.” On the place of feedback in “high quality teaching”, most students affirmed the need for discussing marked scripts with students after assessments by teachers. The students’ assertion was confirmed by the teachers as acknowledged that feedback from students is used for improving the course. The findings of this case study are relevant to current research in the area, as they confirm earlier findings that students generally welcome feedback (Nott 2013).

4.2.5 Participant Self-evaluation: Lecturers and Learners

In view of the apparent dearth of direct involvement of administrators in language teaching they were left out of the self-evaluation. This option was therefore limited to only EAP lecturers and students.

Student participants were also asked to indicate whether they had experienced any improvements in specific competencies in reading, writing, speaking, and listening after taking the course. Their responses are summarised in Table E4.2-5 under Appendix E. The results of the students’ self-evaluation presented above look generally encouraging: Majority of the students rated their communication skills as good; an indication that the objectives of the EAP course at the UDS were indeed being achieved. While acknowledging some deficiencies in all four areas – reading, writing; listening; and, speaking, students also attested to significant improvements in their general communication skills in English. A significant number of final-year students (45%) considered their reading skills as excellent. Though only one percent of first-year students rated their reading as excellent, majority of them (98% = 33+65%) rated it as good. Writing was rated as excellent by 29% and 6% of final and first-year students respectively. Listening was identified as the second most improved skill of both year-groups, recording 33% for final-year students; and, 14% for first years. While final-year students rated speaking as their third most improved skill (equaling writing in percentage), those in first year identified it as their best (excellent). The persistence of deficiencies in some skills as pointed out by the lecturers was confirmed by these results as a total of 14% each from the first and final-year classes acknowledged varying degrees of weaknesses in the four skills.

The lecturers were also requested to assess the course-inception capabilities of their learners; whether the challenges still existed or not; and how those challenges were met. In response, they identified, as the major course-initial challenges of students, “*grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction.*” Learners’ understanding of the basic rules of English language usage was also considered poor by the lecturers. They emphasized the need for smaller class sizes than currently pertains at UDS; adding that “*a dedicated library of English literature be established.*” One of the lecturers further observed that, “[t]he EAP course is taught in only one trimester. This should be increased to two.” On the degree of achievement of quality objectives, the UDS lecturers rated the extent of achievement differently. While one declined to comment; the other rated it as average (50%).

Overall

Using data from respondents as a guide, the quality of teaching and learning EAP at UDS was determined within the university’s context by measuring the extent to which these set objectives were being met. The results generally present an interesting disagreement between learners and their teachers who doubted the students’ claim of marked improvement in their general communication skills. The teachers rated the achievement of the overall quality objectives as average and pointed out that learners still had challenges. These striking contradictions were observed in the responses from the two groups of participants: Whereas majority of students rated their general communication skills as good; their teachers observed that a good number of them still had problems in writing, grammar and pronunciation. Interestingly, the lecturers tended to agree with their students on the possible causes of these challenges which included large class sizes and short course duration.

4.2.6 Respondents’ Perspectives on a “Good Teacher”

As part of the evaluation process, this study sought to ascertain from EAP learners of UDS and their managers what their views were about the “ideal” teacher. Teachers were left out of this to ensure a more neutral and much fairer and independent assessment of these key players at the centre of knowledge transmission and acquisition. Perspectives of learners and the managers on a “good teacher” are discussed below.

Participants were given the opportunity to identify any three attributes they considered as qualities of a good teacher. The same question was repeated to establish from learners what

attributes they considered most essential and desirable of a good teacher through their recurrence in the responses. Table E4.2-6 in Appendix E depicts how UDS students rated the attributes of a good teacher. From the responses, the teacher's general demeanour in class was rated as the most desirable attribute by majority (37.6%) of UDS students. This was followed by pedagogical skills which 31.2% of the respondents considered important. How the course is presented drew 22.7% of the respondents, with mode of delivery attracting only 8.5% to be the lowest-rated quality. On how a "good teacher" can be determined, most of the students cited students' performance as the main determinant, followed by course presentation and learners' understanding of the course (data not displayed on table). The last two were accorded equal importance by the learners. The students were further asked to evaluate their EAP teachers based upon the above standards. The results were impressive, as majority (84.4%) of the students affirmed that their teachers possessed these attributes, with only 11.3 % objecting to that assertion. The remaining, who were unsure, represented only 4.3% of the total number of respondents.

The three-credit EAP course in UDS is handled by two lecturers. At the time of fieldwork for this project one had Masters in English Language, while the other was a doctoral candidate in Communication Studies. Table E4.2-7a in Appendix E provides some details on their experiences in tertiary level teaching. The two teachers who were interviewed were both of the rank of lecturer with an average of 6 years' experience in tertiary-level teaching. Like the Wa Polytechnic, UDS is a fairly young institution. This makes the average teaching experience portrayed in Table 4.2-7a quite impressive. To ascertain whether the UDS learners considered experience a desirable attribute of a good teacher, a slightly modified questionnaire of the Grundtvig Learning Partnership (2009-2011) was used based on the Likert scale: Essential, Important, Might be important, and No response. Table E4.2-7bin Appendix E depicts their views on the importance of teachers' experience. From the statistics, it is evident that the UDS students consider teachers' experience important in contributing to the achievement of quality EAP learning experience. Majority (41.8%) of them rated experience as an important quality of the EAP teacher, 39% saw it as essential, with 6.4% saying it might be important. Those who did not respond constituted 11.4%; while those who felt it is not important at all constituted only 1.4%.

The same question that was put to students was repeated as the opening question in the administrators' interview. They described "a good teacher" as one who:

- is conversant with his/her area of study; and effectively delivers his lectures;
- has good rapport with his/her students; and ensures effective assessment;
- is able to finish his course outline;
- gives assessments/projects, marks, and discusses them with his students;
- organises class tests; and whose students pass his exams.

On how a good teacher can be determined, one of the administrators identified "*observation by conscientious heads of department and deans,*" as well as having students assess the lecturer as some the methods. The other respondent cited the quality of examination results of students of the teacher, marking of class assessments, and interviewing students of the teacher as some of the mechanisms adopted in determining a "good teacher."

Overall

It is evident from the results presented in Table 4.2-6 above that the UDS students value teachers whose very demeanour in class dispels timidity and fosters the desirable ambiance for a rewarding learning experience. The students also felt that a good teacher must be someone who is experienced. Their complaint of not being allowed to express alternative views during assessments gives cause for concern as that constitutes not only a recipe for rote learning; but also has a high potential of stifling research, critical thinking, and analytical skills. The students' impressive rating of their EAP lecturers is a clear indication that the allegations are not widespread and that learner satisfaction with lecturer performance is very high. The UDS managers shared the views of the students regarding what they considered as the attributes of a "good teacher". They also agreed with the students on course presentation, understanding, and student performance as the main determinants of a good teacher; but added that observing the teacher and interviewing students could also be useful. Though these observations do not necessarily present novel quality assessment mechanisms, they nonetheless affirm UDS' commitment towards maintaining basic quality standards.

4.2.7 Perspectives on the Conduciveness of the Learning Environment

As a major factor in ensuring quality learning experience, views of participants were also sought on the conduciveness of the learning environment. Their responses are discussed here in turn.

This option was not available for the administrative class and was limited to students and their teachers. Their observations are discussed in turn.

Student participants in this study were asked to assess both the physical and social climates of their learning environment and how these impact the quality of their EAP learning experience. Of the 141 respondents, 89 (representing 63.1%, representing the majority) expressed dissatisfaction with the conduciveness of their current learning environment. The number of those who said they were satisfied with the environment was 48, constituting 34% of respondents; while the remaining four (representing 2.8 %) said they were unsure. Three main factors were cited by the students as responsible for this state of affairs at UDS. They include: 1) uncomfortable physical teaching and learning environment; 2) inadequate or unavailable teaching and learning materials, and 3) unsatisfactory learning experience. Specifically, the students identified the following physical environmental challenges as factors contributing to the above situation which impacts negatively on the quality of their learning experience:

- congestion;
- inadequate furniture;
- poor ventilation;
- poor acoustics/audibility;
- poor visibility;
- distant lecture venues;
- non-conductive lecture periods;
- absence of internet connectivity;
- noise; and
- general discomfort in lecture halls.

Not all, learners also identified some general ambient factors that negatively affect their learning. Some of these are direct products of the physical environmental challenges identified earlier, and include:

- short course duration;
- inadequate teaching and learning materials
- inadequate class exercises/practice;

- poor student-teacher interaction
- poor speaking culture; and
- work overload for teachers and learners;

Generally, learners observed that oftentimes relevant teaching and learning materials are unavailable. In instances where they existed, they are simply inadequate or outdated and not “fit” for their purpose.

In every academic institution, the library plays a crucial role in quality teaching and learning. To measure the level of students’ satisfaction with existing library facilities at UDS, the students were asked to assess the quality and adequacy of their library generally in terms of services and relevant reference materials for their courses on the scale: Satisfactory; somehow satisfactory; unsatisfactory; and: Very adequate; adequate and Inadequate respectively. The results showed that most (61%) of the reading materials for EAP were published in 2009 or earlier; as against six percent published in 2012. Those published in 2011 and 2010 constituted 12.8 and 19.9% respectively (table not displayed). The results suggest that available books in the library are not current enough, hence the need to stock it with new and current ones.

This study also found that besides the library, the students relied on other sources for information relating to their course. The survey results showed that lecture notes represent the main source of relevant information on the EAP course to most (78%) of the students. Textbooks from the university library represented only 7.8% of source material, with personal library and the Internet constituting 4.3% each. Overreliance on lecture notes by students gives cause for worry as such practice has a high potential of encouraging rote learning.

The internet has become an indispensable tool in teaching and learning today. However, UDS student respondents pointed out that internet service is currently unavailable at the library. Majority (83%) of the UDS students said they are able to source information online, with a remainder of only 17% unable to do so. With such a high ICT awareness level among students, the internet could have been a ready and useful alternative source of current information on EAP. Regrettably, due to the unavailability of internet on campus, majority (69%) of the UDS students said they rely on private internet cafés in town; while (29%) use modems and can only do so after lectures. The remaining 2% said they browse the internet in their hostels.

4.2.8 Assessing the EAP Curriculum

In the absence of a framework similar to the CEFR for the provision of subject benchmarks, the curriculum provides a substitute as it outlines course objectives that teachers and learners are required to meet by the end of the course. This study thus found it expedient to ask participants to assess the suitability of the EAP curriculum used in their institution. This option was limited to students and their lecturers as it was considered an area that the two categories of participants are directly involved in.

The survey sampled the views of learners on the comprehensiveness and relevance of topics in the EAP curriculum used in their institution. On the content and relevance of the existing EAP curriculum, 68.8% of the students said the content of the curriculum was comprehensive enough, while in the view of 27.7%, it was not. Those who were unsure constituted only 3.5% (table not displayed). The results show that majority of students agree to the comprehensiveness of the existing curriculum. Nonetheless, they also believed that a lot more could be done to enhance it, as most of them said they would recommend a review of the existing curriculum. The following additions to the curriculum were proposed by those who advocate a review: 1) Syntax, usage, and phonetics were recommended for inclusion by majority (64.5%) of respondents. They justified this suggestion by arguing that while grammar constitutes the bedrock of usage; knowledge in phonetics would greatly enhance their pronunciation and oral communication skills in English. 2) Basic communication was recommended by 22% of respondents, arguing that introducing basic communication into the curriculum would help learners understand basic communication theories and how they can be applied to EAP. 3) General knowledge was the least rated (11.3%). The students felt that introducing topics relating to globalisation into the curriculum could go a long way to helping learners better appreciate current trends in EAP. They also recommended the addition of “World Englishes” to the EAP curriculum. The reason they gave for this was that the failure of many senior high schools students at the WASSCE could partly be attributed to their inability to distinguish British English from American. A small minority of 2.1% said they were not sure of what exactly should be added to the existing curriculum; though they also endorsed the review. On which topics should be removed from the existing curriculum and why, the few who supported their exclusion cited reading and ambiguity. Against reading, they argued that it was unnecessary because all tertiary students can read. Their complaint about the topic “ambiguity” was simply that it confused them.

When views of the teachers were sought on the conduciveness of the EAP learning environment at UDS, they corroborated the views of their students on the subject in most cases. For instance, on the conduciveness of the EAP learning environment, both teachers conceded that it was not comfortable enough; a view held by majority of learners too. The teachers also admitted that there were not enough reference material on the EAP course for use by learners and teachers at the university. As a result, “[l]ecturers give them [students] handouts to photocopy”, one of them pointed out. The other declined to respond. On how they come by materials to teach and conduct research, both lecturers cited their personal libraries as the main source. The study also sought lecturers’ opinions on the scope and relevance of the content of the EAP curriculum to students’ needs. They both responded in the negative. They also gave different dates for the development of the curriculum: 2006 and 2008, and denied any major review since. On what should be added to the new curriculum in the event of a possible review, the lecturers recommended the inclusion of semantics, comprehension, summary, phonology/phonetics, language usage, and writing. On topics in the current curriculum considered less relevant and should be left out in the new one, one of the teachers cited editing and spelling as least desirable; but the other declined to respond. When requested to suggest measures for enhancing the EAP course, one of the lecturers said: “*We need small class sizes and a library of English literature.*” The other observed: “*The course is taught in only one trimester. This should be increased to two. Also, the class size should be reduced.*”

Overall

From the results of this survey, it is evident that the UDS students agree that a conducive teaching and learning environment is critical for assuring the quality of the teaching and learning of EAP. Regrettably, they did not consider their current learning environment conducive enough. With the current student population of the Wa campus standing at 12,349, some EAP lecture sessions sometimes record over a 1000 student attendance. The effect of this phenomenon on teaching and learning is not farfetched: Not only does it put a serious strain on available lecture-hall furniture; but it also makes the classrooms congested and very noisy. The Upper West region, where the Wa Campus is located, records some of the highest temperatures in Ghana (sometimes recording a maximum of 104 degrees Fahrenheit) during the hot season between October and April (discussed under 4.1.1). Some EAP lecture sessions are held in the afternoon and require that first-year students from different departments converge in one

auditorium for lectures. For want of furniture, some learners are compelled to stand throughout the two hours that a lecture may last. This, coupled with the heat and congestion, creates general discomfort for learners during EAP lectures. Those who sit or stand at the back also complained of having difficulties in seeing clearly notes written or beamed from projectors unto the white board or hearing clearly what is said by the teacher. It was rather interesting that some of the students thought otherwise. To them, the environment within which teaching takes place does not really matter when it comes to the delivery of quality EAP teaching. What matters most, they argued, is the quality of materials handed out to learners and the effectiveness of the methodology adopted in teaching the course. UNICEF (2000: 7) asserts that quality learning depends on the combined qualities of physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements.

Other general factors the students deemed needful for quality learning experience include: the availability of quality learning materials and facilities like a well-stocked library, current and relevant reference materials and a reliable internet service. Interestingly, the lecturers, like their students, identified large class sizes during EAP lecture sessions as a major worry and thus recommended a reduction to ensure quality learning experience. The view held by the students on the short duration for EAP course was shared by their teachers. Though the two groups called for an extension in the course duration, they failed to agree on the exact duration. While the teachers proposed an extension from one trimester to two, their students felt the EAP course should be taken throughout the four years of undergraduate studies. On the need for curriculum review, the teachers agreed with their students on most of the proposed additions.

4.1.9 Participant Views on Relevance of Tertiary-Level English Teaching and Learning

The importance of EAP teaching and learning in HEIs has generally been tied to its remedial, transitional, and transformational functions in the learning experience of students, especially “freshers”. To ascertain how these functions are enhanced through quality assurance at UDS, views of students, their teachers, and managers were solicited. On the teaching of English at UDS, this study found that in addition to English for Academic Purposes (EAP), locally called ‘Communication Skills’, other aspects of English language-related courses, which could generally be termed as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), are also taken by students depending on their fields of study. They include: Development Communication; Business Communication; Introduction to Journalism; English Language; and Study Skills. This study concentrated on EAP

because of its compulsoriness as a course that must be taken by all first-year students irrespective of their programme offerings.

When asked to comment on the relevance of English teaching at tertiary level, UDS students massively affirmed its importance. Typical of academia, there were some respondents who did not subscribe to the relevance claim and raised interesting arguments. The survey results showed that majority (94.3%) of UDS students considers the teaching and learning of English at tertiary level was very essential. Reasons they gave for its relevance, in order of importance, included:

- enhancement of basic communication and linguistic skills (60.3%);
- remediation (28.4%); and
- socio-economic reasons (11.3%).

By enhanced basic communication and linguistic skills, they implied an improvement in their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. The remedial function of EAP was explained by UDS students as the teaching of the course with a view to helping learners with weak backgrounds in the English language to improve upon their communication skills. A respondent put it this way:

Yes. This is because the less privileged who were not able to get a good startup still need to be guided. If this is not done, it hinders the performance and communication of these less privileged.

Another reason given was the weak foundation of many students in the English language. Students, they argued, move higher with these problems and therefore it is necessary that they still learn English even at tertiary level. Respondents also felt that learning English at tertiary level had some socio-economic benefits. They observed that the pervasiveness of English language use in all facets of society makes possessing good communication skills in the language an enhancer human relations and job prospects. In that context, English is seen as: *“The only medium through which one can communicate more effectively in the field of work and in imparting knowledge.”* On the universality of the language, the students observed that besides it being *“our lingua franca, almost all courses offered are taught in English and need critical analysis for accurate answers.”* The view expressed here by the students is a true reflection of

the status of English language in Ghana. As a former British colony and member of the Commonwealth, English is the only official language of Ghana and the main medium of instruction from upper primary to the university level.

The few (4.3%) who objected to its relevance offered some fascinating explanations as basis for their arguments: 1) the fact that students have been learning English since childhood; 2) the assumption that all tertiary students already understand English, and 3) the need for indigenisation. The respondent who observed that students have been learning the subject since childhood used this as basis to describe the learning of English at tertiary level as an *“unnecessary repetition.”* The one who felt that all tertiary level students already knew enough English contended that since a pass in English language is a prerequisite for admission into any tertiary institution in Ghana, every tertiary student must have passed the subject before being offered a place. Interesting though these arguments may sound, those who advanced them failed to observe that some students came from ‘less endowed’ schools with poor communication skills in the language. For such the essence of the remedial role of English language teaching at tertiary level cannot be overemphasized. Their argument also seems to overlook the fact that EAP teaching plays of a bridging role in helping “freshers” transition smoothly from the senior high school style of using the language to tertiary level usage. On the need for indigenisation, one of the students argued: *“No, because developing countries like Ghana should rather concentrate on our indigenous or local languages. When this is done it would rather help us more than learning English.”* Practitioners’ standpoint on the relevance of English language teaching at tertiary level was obtained by seeking the views of teachers of the EAP course. Their responses are discussed in the next paragraph.

Sharing their views on the relevance of English teaching and learning at tertiary level, the lecturers who were interviewed both affirmed the importance of the subject. Whereas one observed that it enhanced performance in other courses of study, a view earlier expressed by the students; the other stated: *“English language is becoming a global language; as such students must be taught so as to be able to communicate with a wider community.”*

To assess the state of the EAP course at UDS, lecturers were requested to identify any major course-initial weaknesses they observed in majority of learners. The teachers observed that

grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction posed the greatest challenges to their learners when they started teaching the course. They also identified learners' poor understanding of the rules of English language usage as another area of concern. On the possible causes of these and other challenges of learners in the English language, the teachers cited environmental, ethnic, and socio-linguistic factors as contributory. They observed that as a multilingual society, the ethnic, linguistic and social backgrounds of learners played a role in their language learning. As a multilingual society, both lecturers believed the ethnic and socio-linguistic backgrounds of learners could influence their learning of English through *"some local language words finding their way into students' written and spoken English."* One of the lecturers observed that: *The socio-linguistic backgrounds of students could impede their ability to pronounce English words properly, and sentence constructions.* Both lecturers affirmed that some of their students exhibited such characteristics, and identified pronunciation, (spoken English), and syntax as the most affected areas. These observations strongly confirm earlier assertions in Chapter One of this thesis, and the acknowledgement by some student subjects of this study.

On whether they had noticed any improvements in the general communication and linguistic skills of learners since they started taking the EAP course, one of the lecturers responded in the affirmative; but the other declined to respond. The agreement by the teacher of some improvements being observed in the communication skills of learners affirms the claim by learners that they have made progress in their linguistic and general communication skills. Both teachers declined to comment on how they managed to address the challenges they observed in their learners when they began taking the EAP course. However, when asked to suggest ways of enhancing English language teaching at tertiary level in Ghana, they recommended the following strategies:

- *Encouraging students to read literary works and to develop the art of writing;*
- *English language classes should have smaller numbers (not more than 100 students) so as to allow for effective interaction between teachers and students.*

Overall

The object of this study has been to explore the application of quality assurance principles to tertiary-level teaching and learning in general, and to language teaching in particular, using EAP as the unit of analysis. The study observed that the role of EAP as a remedial tool constitutes

main basis for English teaching at tertiary level. The observation that many prospective tertiary students do not perform very well in the English language at the secondary level and spend a long time at home trying to better their grades before they can access tertiary education depicts a reality on the ground. Of recent, the running of remedial classes by private individuals and institutions has become big time business in Ghana. Perennial poor performance of candidates at the West Africa Senior High School Examinations (WASSCE) in the core subjects – English, Science and Mathematics – has been responsible for this phenomenon. In the 2012 WASSCE for instance, 13,950 candidates representing 18% of the 174,835 candidates who sat the exam failed in English (Ollenu, 2012). Some candidates with very weak backgrounds in these subjects have had to take the Core English paper more than twice just to get the basic pass of C6 to progress to tertiary level. Increased access at the basic and secondary levels vis-à-vis the slow pace of expanding academic facilities at the tertiary level over the years compel the universities and other tertiary educational institutions in the country to reject otherwise qualified applicants. These two phenomena constitute the main hurdles that keep many average senior high school graduates at home longer than expected. The longer they stay at home, the less their use of the English language; hence, making an already bad situation even worse. Placed in a much broader context of EAP research, results of this study bear an interesting resemblance to findings of a similar one conducted earlier by Evans and Green (2007) to examine the linguistic challenges experienced by Cantonese-speaking students at Hong-Kong's largest English-medium university.

4.2.10 Observed Challenges to QA Implementation at UDS

Three main challenges were identified as factors impeding the smooth implementation of quality assurance at UDS. They include: 1) inadequate physical infrastructure; 2) inadequate teaching and learning materials, and 3) the short course duration for EAP. This study observed that although a QA Unit has been in existence at UDS since 2008, its mode of disseminating quality models has not caught on sufficiently with staff as a section of the key players of the institution conceded that they were unaware of major institutional quality policies. They observed that QA models are prepared by management and disseminated through heads of department, with supervision from the deans. Quality assurance calls for the involvement of all actors, who must be seen as working together towards achieving a common quality objective. Leaving out some major players in the development and dissemination stages can threaten its acceptability and create apathy during implementation. It is therefore important that all major stakeholders,

especially teachers, are involved in all processes leading to implementation to ensure quality enhancement. As far as quality in language teaching was concerned, one of the major challenges observed had to do with the socio-cultural backgrounds of learners. With significant numbers of students coming from identical regional, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, the tendency to speak vernacular with other students sharing those backgrounds is very high and can pose a major challenge to quality EAP teaching and learning. This can affect both their written and spoken English, especially pronunciation, grammar and construction as already attested to by teachers. This situation is further aggravated by the inadequate hostel facilities on the Wa campus of UDS. Living together in a hostel where there is heterogeneity could necessitate the speaking of English with peers from other parts of the country who do not speak the same language or dialect, and thus help improve upon students' spoken English skills. On the availability of reference materials on EAP, learners and their teachers felt available stocks were inadequate and a bit obsolete; hence, the need to acquire more and newer stock. The unavailability of campus-wide internet connectivity to provide an alternative source of relevant and supplementary information on EAP compels learners to rely on modems and private internet cafés in town. Insufficient contact hours and short course duration for the EAP course also constituted a major source of worry to both students and teachers as either category of survey participants indicated dissatisfaction with the current arrangement of two hours per week for only one trimester.

4.2.11 QA Practices and Language Learning Approaches Considered Unique to UDS

One of the main objectives of this study has been to identify some of the QA practices and language learning approaches that are considered unique to the case institutions involved in the survey and to recommend them for replication elsewhere. All three categories of survey participants were thus asked questions relating to these areas and their responses are discussed in turn below, starting with students'.

The UDS student participants recommended that to ensure effective EAP teaching and learning, the mechanisms summarised in Table E4.2-8 should be taken into account. In order of importance, the mode of delivery was identified as the key factor in ensuring quality the EAP tuition. This was recommended by majority (41.1%) of the students. By that, they meant clarity and practicality of lessons through the use of dialogue and discussions. EAP lessons, they felt,

should encourage teaching of grammar, writing, spelling, phonetics, and indigenous communication skills. Speaking should also be encouraged through oral presentations. The UDS students also recommended the use of appropriate technologies, and tutorials. They emphasized that lessons should reflect real-world-of-work experience for learners. Above all, teachers must be prepared for classes and be well organised during lectures. Teachers must also endeavour to inspire interest of their learners in the course and be available for consultation by learners on issues relating to the course.

Course presentation and teachers' bearing in class were accorded equal importance, attracting 21.3% each of the responses to become the second most important tool. For quality course presentation, they suggested that the compulsoriness of EAP to first-year students should be maintained and that there should always be a pre-course orientation to help learners appreciate the importance of the course. For the realisation of a conducive social-climate-enhancing bearing in class, teachers must be punctual, regular, approachable, and encouraging. They must also respect the views of their learners. This was expressed by a participant as: *"paying attention to the feedback of his/her students and incorporating them into his teaching method."* Students felt the teacher must also be humble enough to admit to students that he/she does have an idea about a question asked by a learner.

The 8.5% of respondents that chose pedagogy, recommended that teachers must not be *"glued to one methodology,"* but should be ready to vary their approach as and when necessary. Performance enhancement tools, the least rated mechanism with only 7.8% of responses, was also recommended by UDS students for its potential of ensuring the provision of relevant teaching and learning materials; appointment and retention of qualified and experienced professionals to teach the course; and putting in place monitoring and supervision mechanisms to assure quality.

In agreement with their students, the EAP teachers recommended that: *"The English/Communication Skills course should be taken for at least two years in all programmes and that the credits for the course should be raised to three."* To achieve quality EAP tuition, the teachers also recommended a style of teaching that would result in positive behaviour change in students, by providing the appropriate or relevant subject content that meets students' understanding. They recommended the adoption of a student-centred approach to teaching EAP,

arguing that “*quality EAP tuition can be achieved when teachers of the course themselves are knowledgeable in the course and adopt appropriate teaching methods.*”

The managers opined that achieving quality in teaching and learning EAP requires that assessments are standard and relevant. Lecturers must also prepare well before they go to teach and punctual too, as their students would assess them at the end of the second trimester. This view of the administrators was shared by the students as well. The administrators also recommended the putting in place of a self-assessment mechanism for teachers, where lecturers would assess themselves. There should also be periodic inspections on how lecturers teach the subject, they added.

Overall, it was interesting to note that all the three categories of participants in this study agreed on most of the quality-enhancing tools they recommended for EAP teaching and learning, though stated differently. The students agreed with their teachers and managers in recommending effective mode of delivery, teacher preparedness, pedagogy, and extension of course duration for EAP. The students, however, added that there should also be a pre-course orientation for learners. The administrators went a step further by recommending the institution of a self-assessment mechanism for teachers and periodic inspections of their performance.

4.2.12 Conclusion

Examining the periodic review of academic programmes generally to confirm the extent to which the EAP course is meaningfully structured and organised, assessing how far its goals and learning objectives are being achieved and identifying QA policies that directly impact the teaching and learning of the course at UDS constituted some of the assessment tools in this study. The researcher also took into account possible unintended consequences and other forms of impact. Four main conclusions can be drawn from the study. First, the vast majority of students and their teachers attest to the relevance of teaching English language at tertiary level in Ghana. Like their colleagues from the Wa Polytechnic, they cited the remedial role and socio-economic importance of EAP teaching and learning to the key actors in higher education as the main justification for the need to put in place efficient and effective quality assurance mechanisms to enhance its teaching. Some UDS students, who did not consider the teaching of English at tertiary level necessary, argued that African countries like Ghana should concentrate on indigenisation by promoting local African languages. They also felt that since a credit in

English is the prerequisite for admission into tertiary educational institutions, it can be assumed that every tertiary student is capable of reading and writing; hence, teaching English at tertiary level is unnecessary. Some also cited the apparent overlap between certain topics treated in EAP and those taught in the senior high school, and argued that English learning at tertiary level is an “unnecessary repetition.” Second, in spite of the existence of both internal and external quality assurance systems at UDS, awareness levels among key players are quite low. The few respondents who claimed to be aware of the existence of quality models think there is still a lot of room for improvement. Third, the socio-ethnic backgrounds of learners can compromise the quality of their language learning, especially in the areas of grammar, pronunciation, and construction. Fourth, a lot of work needs to be done in improving the physical learning environment at UDS, as teachers and majority of student participants in this study felt the current environment is not conducive enough for quality EAP teaching and learning. Participants called for the expansion of physical infrastructure and the provision of quality teaching and learning materials. Besides the physical learning environment, learners considered the general social climate of UDS as crucial in guaranteeing a rewarding learning experience for EAP learners. They expected teachers to be patient, listening, approachable and humble. In assessments, the students said they desired to be allowed to express their opinions when responding to questions and not be limited to the content of lecture notes as some of their teachers compelled them to do. On the importance of this research to the institution in general and EAP teachers in particular, it is hoped that by highlighting the quality concerns of learners, academic and administrative issues can be tailored to fit the purposes for which they were designed and afford learners and/or their parents (“customers”) value for their money.

4.3 Case HEI III: Catholic University College of Ghana (CUCG)

At the Catholic University College of Ghana a total sample size of 154, comprising 150 students, two administrators, and two course lecturers were targeted in the survey. They included the following:

- A Senior Assistant Registrar,
- A Quality Assurance Coordinator,
- Communication Skills/English Language Lecturers
- Students

While all the four academic and administrative staff participated in the interview, only 120 students (80% of the 150) responded to the survey questionnaires which comprised both closed and open-ended items. A detailed description of the data collection process is provided under 3.2.3).

4.3.1 Background and Context

The CUCG was established by the Catholic Church as one of the over sixty private universities in Ghana. Following its accreditation as a private tertiary educational institution in 2002, the university matriculated its first batch of undergraduate students in 2003. The permanent campus is located at Fiapre near Sunyani, capital of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana, some 232 miles (373km) from Accra, the national capital. Statistics from the 2010 Ghana Population and Housing Census put the population of the municipality at approximately 123,224, about 5.3% of the total regional population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

The university moved to its current and permanent site some four years ago. As a new campus, lots of constructional activities were going on at the time of fieldwork for this study. Major completed buildings include three three-storey lecture hall complexes, one of which houses the auditorium at its basement, and one cluster of blocks serving as a hostel facilities for students. There was no staff accommodation on campus at the time of fieldwork for this study. The twenty-one bungalows earmarked for that were at various stages of completion. The administration, lecturers' offices, and the library are all temporarily housed in parts of the lecture hall complex buildings. CUCG's immediate competitors in the provision of tertiary education in the municipality are the Sunyani Polytechnic and the recently established University for Energy

and Allied Sciences. Currently the CUCG runs various degree and diploma programmes across five faculties. It has a total workforce of 126 comprising 79 academic and 49 management and supporting staff. The university also has 47 part-time teachers for various programmes (CUCG, 2013). The total number of registered fulltime students for the 2011/2012 academic year was 4,180 full-time. Like other tertiary educational institutions in the country, all first-year students are obliged to take the Language and Communication course for one year.

4.3.2 CUCG: Mission and strategy

CUCG believes that human growth and national development are achievable through quality education. As a Catholic educational institution, CUCG holds the following core values: “qualitative, innovative, practical, and holistic education” (CUCG, 2011). CUCG’s mission is “to promote academic excellence, moral or ethical values, as well as the integral personal development of its students and their commitment to service” (CUCG, 2011). In order to accomplish this mission, the university envisions:

Creating a unique university that can make a distinctive contribution to national development as an institution of academic and technical excellence, whose products are endowed with real practical ability, a moral vision of life and a profound religious motivation for service in all spheres of life.

This strategic vision of CUCG’s is driven by its goal of:

- establishing a home of academic and technical excellence;
- providing holistic education and training;
- instilling discipline and moral excellence, and
- commitment to service. (Ibid.)

As a private faith-based university the CUCG is funded mainly by the Catholic Church. Even though EAP is not specifically mentioned, it is clear from its mission, vision and goals that the overall aim of the university is the provision of quality teaching and learning in all programmes, EAP inclusive. Thus, determining the extent of CUCG’s success or failure in implementing quality in teaching and learning in general, and in EAP in particular would depend largely on its level of achievement in realising its declared mission and objectives. A review of the university’s

quality assurance mechanisms would also help examine the extent to which the programmes are aligned to the mission and objectives of CUCG.

Factors influencing CUCG's culture

CUCG's culture is foremost defined by its status as a faith-based private university. The managers interviewed at CUCG consider the culture of the university as being influenced by 1) examination results and expertise of staff; 2) the good academic leadership of the Vice Chancellor and, 3) the need to meet the expectations of the NAB and monitoring institutions. This means that CUCG's culture is influenced by both external and internal expectations, which are intrinsically interwoven. Internally, good leadership would ensure that scarce resources are managed well; quality teaching and learning materials are provided; and teachers are properly monitored to deliver quality tuition and assessment for positive outcomes. Externally, the institution is required to observe quality standards stipulated by NAB for privately owned HEIs in Ghana. In addition, it is expected to stick to tertiary norms laid down by the NCTE and mentoring institutions. As a member of the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the Ghana Association of Private Universities, CUCG is also expected to abide by rules that regulate the activities of their membership to ensure quality standards. CUCG's status as a private university also requires it to be affiliated to an older and state-funded university for at least four years before it can be granted a presidential charter to award its own degrees and diplomas. Graduates of the CUCG shall receive certificates of its mentoring institutions until it is granted a presidential charter (NAB, 2010). In line with this requirement, CUCG is affiliated to two local public institutions: the Universities of Ghana and Cape Coast. Externally, it partners the Catholic University of America and the Boston University.

4.3.3 Implementing quality at CUCG

"Quality," in the context of CUCG, is considered as excellence in service delivery. To achieve its quality objectives, the university has in place both internal and external QA mechanisms. Internally, CUCG's quality assurance activities are coordinated by the QA Unit headed by a senior lecturer and placed directly under the office of the Vice Chancellor. Besides the QA Unit, the university also has a tall management and governance hierarchy comprising the Ghana Bishops Conference, a Board Trustees, a Governing Council, a Senate and an Academic Board. Together with faculty boards and other statutory committees of the university, these bodies contribute to ensuring that internal quality principles are strictly adhered to. CUCG also has

criteria for quality recruitment, training, retraining, promotion, retention, and sanctioning of staff similar to those of other higher educational institutions in Ghana. Students' enrollment is guided by norms spelt out by external QA bodies like the NCTE, the NAB and mentoring universities that applicants meet certain basic requirements, like a minimum grade of C6 in relevant core and elective subjects, before they are admitted to various programmes. External audits and inspections at CUCG are usually conducted by the NAB and the monitoring universities, particularly the Universities of Ghana and Cape Coast. Staff and students taking professional examinations that are not directly under the purview of the above bodies are required to observe quality standards set by the relevant professional bodies (1.2.2).

Participant perspectives on quality assurance and control processes at CUCG

Views of respondents were sought on the process of assessing good teaching in their institution. They were also asked to comment on tools used in the assessment and evaluation process, and identify existing mechanisms for effective quality control and implementation at CUCG.

CUCG student participants identified periodic assessment or appraisal, observation of teachers' bearing in class and pedagogical skills, qualification and experience as tools used for evaluating good teaching in the institution. From Table F4.3-1 (Appendix F), it can be observed that 45%, constituting majority of the respondents identified periodic assessment and appraisal as the most frequently used assessment tool. They implied by that, the use of questionnaires or surveys to assess the communicative competence or self-expression of the teacher; availability and quality of teaching and learning materials and the qualification and experience of the lecturer. Next in importance to periodic assessment or appraisal is observation, which attracted 38.3% of the responses. By observation, respondents implied looking out for excellence in the lecturer's pedagogical and delivery skills, ability to teach to the understanding of learners, relevance or practicality of lessons, and student or graduate performance. It also encompasses the lecturer's consistency, regularity in class attendance, self-discipline and morality. Respondents who expressed uncertainty about the evaluation tools constituted 16.7% of the population. On specific tools currently in use at CUCG, the students identified appraisal using questionnaires, surveys, or oral interviews to assess the quality of pedagogy, assessment and research activities of the teacher. It also involves assessing the quality of teaching and learning materials and equipment as well as the general conduciveness of the physical learning environment. In

addition, the individual teacher's punctuality and regularity in class, pedagogical and presentation skills, performance of students or graduates are observed.

CUCG lecturers said they assessed their students' progress using written examinations, quizzes, and oral tests that engender the right responses as tools they employ in assessing the progress of their learners,. On the evaluation of good teaching practice, existing tools in the institution or those that should be used, they identified the adoption of lesson plans outlining the introduction, delivery, questions, evaluation, and conclusion as tools. Students are also made to assess the relevance of courses taught and the competence of teachers/lecturers.

Educational managers at the CUCG also attested to the existence of mechanisms at the university for implementing QA. They observed that self-evaluation is mainly done at the individual level. Depending on the level of the individual being assessed, the deans, registrar or Vice Chancellor may or may not come in at all. The evaluation, they said, is usually done by filling in forms specially designed for the exercise. Besides the identified internal QA mechanisms, the CUCG administrators also identified some external mechanisms aimed at maintaining quality standards at the university. This comprises periodic inspection visits by NAB and mentoring institutions like the Universities of Ghana and Cape Coast. The mentoring institutions also monitor and moderate examination scripts. On the impact of the pre- and post-inspection processes on CUCG, one of the administrators observed that: *"The pre-inspection ensures compliance, while the post-inspection ensures future improvements where shortfalls are detected."*

Generally, the teachers agreed with their students on what constituted the main QA and control mechanisms at the CUCG. Student-teacher assessment was identified by both groups of participants in this study as a major QA and control tool in the institution; except that the teachers went further to include written examinations, quizzes and oral test as means of assessing learner progress. The managers identified self-evaluation at individual level, periodic inspections by the NAB and mentoring institutions as some of the internal and external QA mechanisms in place.

Applying quality principles for effective teaching and learning of EAP

As a means of exploring quality delivery in response to stakeholders' demand for value for money, this study sought to assess how QA principles are applied for effective EAP teaching and

learning. Survey participants were asked to rate the gap between students' expectations before taking the course and their actual learning experience afterwards. A correlation analysis was used to determine whether students' expectations in the EAP course had been met. This is illustrated in Table F4.3-2 under Appendix F. With a p-value of -0.041 and sig-value of 0.656 testing with an alpha value of 0.05, there is not enough evidence that there is a significant relationship or association between student expectations before taking the language and communication course and improvement in their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills after the course. This is because the sig-value is greater than the alpha value. By implication, the gap between student expectations before and after taking the Language and Communication course is close and has no bearing on improvement in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of students of CUCG.

Standards serving as benchmarks for EAP teaching and learning at CUCG

Views of all three categories of participants involved in this study were sought on this subject. Their various standpoints are discussed in turn, beginning with students'.

When CUCG students were asked to identify the various approaches for ensuring quality language teaching in their institution, none of the 120 participants involved in the survey identified the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as a standard for assessing the quality of language teaching. Instead, they cited the compulsoriness of Communication Skills (EAP) in the first year, the availability of efficient and responsible lecturers, research materials, and access to the library and internet as some of the available tools to ensure standard teaching and learning of EAP. The students acknowledged the existence of a good teaching environment, and a disciplinary committee to enforce university regulations. They said they are also encouraged *"to speak the language often and not the local language."* To ensure that lecturers handling the EAP course teach well and impart quality knowledge, their work is supervised and their performance assessed periodically by their students even as they also assess them. That apart, deadlines are set for lecturers to attain course objectives. Other mechanisms they identified included meetings and seminars. Speaking on methodology, a student respondent observed: *"The approaches are initiated by the lecturers; but the effect is obvious on us."*

Expressing their views on subject standards serving as benchmarks for EAP teaching and learning at CUCG, the course lecturers seemed not to agree on the criteria. While one of them

cited the ability to write and speak English language well as a standard; the other conceded that there are no specified such benchmarks. Concerning the effectiveness of these mechanisms at enhancing EAP teaching in CUCG, one of the interviewees acknowledged that there have been marked improvements in these respects. The other did not respond to the question. On factors determining the choice of those subject standards, a lecturer cited *“the weak oral and written strengths of our learners”* as a major contributory factor. The other lecturer again declined to respond. It is obvious that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was not in use here, as the teachers, like their students never made any reference to it.

On quality policies directly impacting the teaching and learning of EAP at CUCG, one of the managers cited students’ assessment of lecturers; but his colleague declined to comment. Like the other two categories of participants, the managers did not also mention the CEFR.

Overall

It was surprising that none of the three groups of participants in this study cited the CEFR as a tool for ensuring quality language teaching. The closest response to the framework’s can-do threshold was when one of their subject teachers identified the ability of learners to speak and write English well as a standard. The students also cited the setting of deadlines for teachers to meet course objectives as another standard. Though they also agreed with their administrator in identifying student-teacher evaluation as another “standard” for quality language teaching at CUCG, one wonders whether that is indeed a standard a not a QA mechanism instead.

4.3.4 Respondents’ perspectives on “high quality” teaching

Earlier in this study (under 4.1.6), it was acknowledged that the term “quality” had been subjected to varied definitions depending on contexts or angles of thought; and that attempting to qualify it with an adjective like “high” certainly makes it even more difficult to attempt. This study is thus not intended to offer another definition; but to identify possible themes from subjects of this study.

On what they understood by “high quality” tuition and how that could be achieved within EAP learning, the students expressed varied opinions. Their views are summarized in Table F4.3-3 under Appendix F. From the table, the majority representing 55.8% of the students, considered the learning environment as the most crucial factor in ensuring “high quality” tuition. To them, “high quality” teaching is how well tuition is carried out, which one of them described as:

“Teaching in a way that will help learners to acquire enough knowledge about the course of study.” The students believed this can be achieved *“by providing the needed materials for the teaching and learning of language; this would require a good teaching environment and the good personality of the lecturers.”* They further observed that “high quality” tuition was achievable if the institution put in place good policies to ensure that all lecturers were very efficient and students also ready to learn. Following this in importance is the mode of delivery, as 25.8% of the learners chose this. A rewarding mode of delivery, according to the students, should take into account teacher preparedness in delivering the lecture as well as ensuring clarity and orderliness in the presentation of the course. It requires assigning sufficient contact hours to the course, and ultimately, enhancing learner understanding. Pedagogy followed with 13.3% of the responses as the third most important tool for ensuring “high quality” tuition at CUCG. On pedagogy, they meant: *“The teacher meeting the needs of the students by answering their questions, asking the students questions to know their problem areas and helping solve them.”* The teacher’s general bearing in class attracted 4.2% of the responses. Only one participant (0.8%) chose course presentation. The lecturer’s mastery of the subject and how effectively and efficiently teaching is done are all very important means of creating the desirable ambience for the realisation of a rewarding learning experience for the student. It was therefore surprising that majority of CUCG students failed to cite this.

The CUCG students also considered the discussion of marked scripts in class by their teachers as crucial in ensuring “high quality” tuition. On the usefulness of post-assessment discussions by their teachers with them in class, the CUCG students considered the practice of teachers discussing marked scripts with them as highly essential to quality EAP learning as 95% of them rated it as such (90%: “very helpful” + 5%: “helpful”). Those who felt it was not helpful and those who were not sure of its usefulness constituted only 0.8% and 3.3% respectively. Asked whether their Language and Communication lecturers discussed marked scripts with them or not majority (72%) of the respondents affirmed that their teachers did so after assessments, with the remaining 28% disagreeing (table not displayed). On whether their teachers used suggestions from the discussions to improve on future examination questions or not, majority (88%) of the CUCG students said they believed their teachers did; with 2% objecting. The remaining 10% however said they were unsure (table not displayed). These findings are very relevant to current

research in the area, in that results of this study confirm other findings that students generally welcome feedback (2.2.2.1).

On what they understood by “high quality” tuition, one of the EAP lecturers at CUCG described it as: “*A situation in which the lecturer knows his students and provides their academic needs accordingly.*” In their view, teaching to the appreciation of students and getting appropriate feedback from them is important for “high quality” tuition. To achieve this in EAP learning, they recommended the communicative approach to teaching English language, which one of them described as “*the sure way.*” Interacting with students, getting to know their problems, and offering them suggestions for addressing the problems were identified as some of the means to ensuring quality in EAP teaching.

The administrators, on the other hand, believed that the advantage in QA of enabling students to report challenges regarding teaching and learning without difficulty and its potential for teachers to ensure that learners get “value for money” through quality teaching can be considered as a sure means to achieving “high quality” tuition.

Overall, the students agreed with their teachers on the role of effective pedagogy in the realisation of “high quality” teaching. The communicative approach to language teaching (CLT), which one of their teachers described as “the sure way” is “a language teaching methodology that emphasizes interaction, student-centred learning, task-based activities, and communication for real-world, meaningful purposes” (Brown, 2007:378). This stance of the teachers’ is very much in keeping with views of their students who also advocated that they would like to see the EAP lessons become more practical and interactive. The results also show that learners value the discussion of marked scripts by their teachers. Their view of effective teaching going hand in hand with studiousness encapsulates the concerted efforts required in implementing quality. Management may formulate policies and implement them; teachers may teach to the best of their abilities, but if learners fail to do their part by studying seriously, positive outcomes cannot be realized. Much in keeping with UNICEF’s assertion that though learning can take place anywhere, effective learning can only take place in a conducive atmosphere (UNICEF, 2000) the CUCG students also felt a congenial learning environment was vital in ensuring “high quality” teaching. The administrators expressed a more general view, asserting that the opportunity QA

affords learners to report challenges in their studies without difficulty can help in the realisation of “high quality” teaching.

4.3.5 Participant Self-evaluation: Lecturers and Learners

In view of the apparent dearth of direct involvement of administrators in language teaching they were excluded from the self-evaluation. It was limited to only the lecturers and students.

Asked whether the Language and Communication (EAP) course was achieving its objectives at CUCG or not, the students were almost unanimous in affirming their realization. Majority (91.7%) of the respondents acknowledged the achievement of EAP course objectives, with the remaining (8%) failing to respond. As a means of encouraging participants to substantiate the above claim, the study further requested them to indicate specific areas they felt had witnessed major improvements. Majority of the respondents (90%) also believed their general communication skills had improved since they started taking the EAP course. An equal percentage of respondents (5% each) disagreed or expressed uncertainty on the level of improvement in their general and linguistic skills. (Tables not displayed). On how they would rate their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills on the scale: excellent, very good, good and weak, the CUCG students made the following ratings summarized in Table F4.3-5 under Appendix F.

Results from the table show that majority of the students rate their overall communication skills as excellent or very good; a good indication of customer satisfaction and a confirmation that the objectives of the EAP course at the CUCG were being achieved. Though the teachers agreed with their students on this claim, it was not total. They rated the achievement of the overall quality objectives as average, conceding that some learners still had challenges in writing and speaking. The results looked generally encouraging. However, while attesting to significant improvements in all their communication skills made possible by their taking the EAP course; the students also acknowledged the persistence of some deficiencies in all four areas. Majority of learners from both year groups (First year: 53%; and Final year: 38%) considered their reading skills as excellent. While 13% of first-year students identified speaking as their weakest area; an equal percentage of their seniors identified it as their best skill. Writing was rated as excellent by 46% and 25% of final and first-year students respectively. While final-year students rated speaking as their third most improved skill equaling writing in percentage, those in first year

identified it as their weakest. Overall, listening was considered the best skill of both first and final-year groups as it recorded zero weakness. The persistence of deficiencies in some skills of learners, as pointed out by their lecturers, was confirmed by these results as both year-groups identified varying degrees of weaknesses in three skills each: in reading, writing, and speaking respectively.

On the achievement of the quality objectives of CUCG, the lecturers rated the extent of achievement differently: While one rated it as *“above average”*; the other rated it as *“very good”*. The lecturers were also requested to assess the course-inception capabilities of their learners. In response, the subject teachers identified, as the major course-initial challenges of students, *“poor reading habits which affect their general output of English.”* Their spelling, grammar, and inappropriate use of diction were also cited as course-initial challenges of some EAP learners at CUCG. When asked whether these initial challenges of EAP learners persisted or not, the lecturers responded in the negative, saying the challenges were addressed by encouraging constant practising, reading, and writing. Learners were also instructed on reading skills and time management. They were given instruction on personal goal setting, *“which has helped to some extent,”* they asserted.

Overall

The study found very interesting the contradictions in the responses from the two groups of participants: Whereas majority of the students rated their general communication skills as excellent; their teachers asserted that some of their students still had problems. This option of evaluating learner achievement was left out in the administrator’s interview because they are not directly involved in handling the EAP course.

4.3.6 Respondent perspectives on a “good teacher”

Views of EAP learners from CUCG and their managers were sought on what they believed made a “good teacher.” Lecturers were left out of this in order to ensure a more neutral and much fairer and independent assessment of these key players at the centre of knowledge transmission and acquisition. The broad categories of students’ and administrators’ responses were subsequently coded and analysed under: 1. Course presentation; 2. Teacher’s general demeanour in class; 3. Mode of delivery; and 4. Pedagogy. Learners’ and the manager’s perspectives on a “good teacher” are discussed in turn.

Participants were given the opportunity to identify any three attributes they considered as qualities of a “good teacher.” The same question was deliberately repeated as means of confirming what attributes the learners considered most essential and desirable of a good teacher through their recurrence in the responses. Tables F4.3-6a and b in Appendix F present a summary of how the learners rated the attributes. From the table, teacher’s bearing in class was rated as the most desirable attribute by majority (61.7%) of CUGC students. This was followed in importance by pedagogical skills which 23.3% of the respondents considered desirable. How the course is presented drew 11% of respondents; with mode of delivery attracting only 4% as the lowest-rated quality. Juxtaposing these results with responses summarized in Table F4.3-6b in Appendix F reveals some interesting findings.

Teacher’s demeanour in class, which was rated first in Table F4.3-6a (Appendix F) maintained its place as the most important quality of a good teacher in Table F4.3-6b (Appendix F) with 51% of responses. Pedagogy maintained its rating as the second most desirable quality of a good teacher (23%) in Table F4.3-6a, and 28% in Table F4.3-6b. Mode of delivery and course presentation were jointly rated as the third best quality of a good teacher in both Tables F4.3-6a and b with 11 and 21% respectively. The results demonstrate that CUCG students value EAP teachers with positive bearings in class that contribute to the creation of a congenial social climate for a worthwhile learning experience. A closer look at the responses revealed that punctuality and patience were highly appreciated by the learners. These qualities recurred in about 32% of the responses that learners gave. Patience and the ability to teach to the understanding of learners were also quite frequent in the raw data. On how a “good teacher” can be determined, the student respondents made some interesting observations, three of which are cited here. One respondent observed:

A good teacher understands his/her students and assists them with their problems. He or she guides the weaker students to better their grades and encourages the students to aim high.

Another simply put it as: “A good listener; punctual in class; respects students.” A third concluded: “I have only become a good learner by using what I have learnt because the lecturer has indeed taught me; teaches like we have not learnt the language before.” These observations aptly expressed three main criteria for determining a good teacher: observation, students’

performance, and course presentation. Asked whether their EAP teachers exhibited these qualities or not, CUCG students rated the lecturers highly as majority (93.3%) them affirmed that their teachers possessed these attributes. An equal percentage of 3.3% each was recorded for those who objected to that assertion and those who were unsure.

The EAP course in CUCG is handled by two lecturers, both of whom had Masters in aspects of English Language at the time of fieldwork for this study: One in African Literature, and the other in Teaching English as a Second language (TESL). Table F4.3-7 in Appendix F gives some details on their experiences in tertiary level teaching. The two teachers who participated in the study were both of the rank of lecturer with a combined experience of 12 years in tertiary-level teaching. Like Wa Poly and UDS, CUCG is a fairly young institution. This makes the average teaching experience depicted in Table 8 quite impressive. To ascertain whether learners at CUCG considered experience an important quality of a good teacher, questionnaire of the Grundtvig Learning Partnership (2011) was slightly modified for use based on the Likert scale: essential, important, might be important, and no response. Table F4.3-8 under Appendix F portrays views of learners on the subject.

The statistics show that the CUCG students consider teachers' experience an important quality for a rewarding EAP learning experience. Majority (53.3%) of them rated experience as an essential quality of the EAP teacher; 26% saw it as important, with 6.7% each saying it might or not be important at all.

The same question that was put to students was repeated in the administrators' questionnaire as the opening question. They described "a good teacher" as a person who is *"ready to impart knowledge and help form students in a holistic manner, and able to lead students to self-discovery through classroom presentations and assignments."* On how a good teacher can be determined, the CUCG administrators identified the conduct of regular end-of-year assessment of lecturers' performance by students and the observation of the quality of their products, i.e. students' outputs as some of the existing mechanisms at that university.

Overall

The responses of the CUCG students discussed above support the erudition and pedagogical standpoints of determining a good teacher (4.1.8.3). Their responses imply that a teacher must

demonstrate mastery of the course and also possess excellent pedagogical, presentational and delivery skills. Exhibiting a good bearing in class is also necessary because it adds to the enhancement of the quality of students' learning experience. The managers shared the views of their students regarding what they considered as the attributes of a “good teacher”, as they also pointed to pedagogy and positive outcomes. Though these observations may appear to be expressing conventional quality assessment mechanisms; they nonetheless affirm CUCG's commitment towards maintaining basic quality standards in executing its core mandate of teaching and learning.

4.3.7 Perspectives on the Conduciveness of the Learning Environment

This section discusses views of participants and interviewees on how congenial they think the learning environment is, taking into account relevant physical and “psychosocial” factors.

The students were asked to assess both the physical and social climates of their learning environment and how these factors could impact on the quality of EAP learning in their institution. Table F4.3-9 under Appendix F presents summary of views of participants on the conduciveness of their learning environment. Of the 120 respondents, 55 (representing 45.8%) expressed dissatisfaction with the conduciveness of their current learning environment. The number of those who said they were satisfied with the environment was 46, constituting 38% of respondents. The remaining 19 (representing 16%) said they were unsure. Factors cited by the CUCG students as accountable for this state of affairs included:

- Inadequate teaching and learning materials, especially reference materials on EAP;
- Poorly equipped language laboratory;
- Noisy environment: Distractions from moving vehicles, especially tankers supplying water for on-going construction works on campus; and from other students.

Generally, the learners observed that some relevant teaching and learning materials were unavailable. Where they existed, they were deemed either inadequate or ‘not fit’ for the purpose because they were old. For QA implementation to be effective, availability must be complemented by utility. This study observes that it is one thing for materials to be available; and another for them to be qualitative and utilizable. For instance, though there is a language

laboratory, it lacked the needed equipment to make it functional. Though there are some reference materials, students felt they were inadequate.

On student complaints about noise and occasional distractions, it would be recalled that CUCG's status as a young university has already been acknowledged elsewhere in this study. The university moved to its current and permanent campus site only four years ago. Thus, to a large extent, the assertion by a learner of there being physical noise was well founded, as brisk constructional activities were indeed going on at the time of fieldwork for this study. Although the effect of this phenomenon on teaching and learning may be uncomfortable, it is but momentary. It is hoped that the projects would soon be completed to enhance the conduciveness of the environment for the very activities that the accompanying noise might have been hampering. Besides the physical environmental drawbacks cited, students also complained about issues that sounded a bit delicate because they bordered on what UNICEF (2000) terms "psychosocial" elements. For instance, one of the survey participants who objected to the conduciveness of the learning environment said (unedited): *"No; because in class one cannot express his or her ideas properly because the least mistake you make either you are sacked or insulted."* The concern raised here by the learner on intolerance also affirms earlier expression of the desire for patience and respect for students by some participants in this survey. On the frequency of EAP lectures per week, the CUCG students said they received tuition four times a week, with majority of them saying they were able to meet their teachers outside regular lecture sessions to discuss issues relating to the EAP course. Overall, the results suggest that sufficient time was being devoted to the teaching and learning of EAP at CUCG; but it would still be interesting to find out later in the study whether learners indeed think so.

The library has often been described as the nerve-centre of the academic institution. In assessing the conduciveness of the learning environment at CUCG, participants were asked to assess this important facility and other sources of relevant information on EAP. To measure their level of satisfaction with existing library facilities and services in their institution, participants were asked to rate the satisfactoriness of the library on the scale: satisfactory; somehow satisfactory; unsatisfactory. As a means of confirming their claims, they were asked to affirm the adequacy or otherwise of EAP-related materials in the library on the scale: very adequate; adequate; and

inadequate respectively. The assessment also considered how current available materials in the library were. Their assessments of the facility are displayed in Tables F4.3-10a and b under Appendix F.

The results from Table F4.3-10a show that majority (54.2%) of the students consider existing facilities and services at the library satisfactory. Those who consider them very satisfactory constituted 6.7%, with the remaining 35.8% saying the facilities and services were less satisfactory. By “satisfactoriness”, they implied the adequacy, relevance, quality, and how up-to-date available materials were. On the adequacy of EAP-related materials, majority of the students rated it as good as shown in Table F4.3-10b above. Regarding how current existing materials at the library were, the students made the following observations (not represented on table): most (35.8%) EAP reference materials were published before 2009; as against 14.2% published in 2012. Those published in 2011, 2010, and 2009 constituted 14%, 11%, and 25% respectively. The results show that the existing stock of reading materials in the library was not current enough. It can therefore be inferred from the results that learners desired to see some improvement in the current provision of service and materials at the library.

On other sources of relevant information on the EAP course, majority (80.8%) of the students relied on lecture notes handed out by their teachers. Personal library accounted for 12.5% of source material, with textbooks from the university and internet sources contributing 3.3% each. The results show students’ over-reliance on lecture notes. This study finds the overreliance of the students on lecture notes to be a bit worrying as such practice stifles the initiative for research and constitutes a recipe for rote learning.

Today, the internet plays a central role in all facets of higher education. Access to a reliable internet service has therefore become a basic necessity and not luxury. Fortunately, participants in this study affirmed the availability of internet connectivity on CUCG campus, with majority (90 %, table not displayed) of them being computer literate and familiar with sourcing information online. Only 10% percent of them said they lack the relevant skills to do so. Despite the acknowledgement by the students of the availability of internet connectivity in the library, a good number of them still relied on other sources for internet access. Majority of users accessed the internet from the university library, and the rest from elsewhere.

4.3.8 Assessing the EAP curriculum

Courses usually have their goals and objectives that teachers and learners ought to achieve by the end of a given period spelt out in the curriculum. The EAP course in CUCG is designed to enhance students' writing skills and the proper use of the English Language (CUCG, 2009). It covers basic grammar rules, proper syntax, word usage, vocabulary enhancement and basic composition, and comprehension. The second component of the course, Communication (Proficiency) Skills (CES 108) aims at improving the communication competence of beginning students in their self-expression at both inter-personal and group relationships. In assessing the quality of the curriculum then, it is important to take into account the course objectives which more or less constitute the benchmarks for the assessment.

The assessment was done based on the content and relevance of the EAP curriculum. The results show 86.7% of the students affirming the comprehensiveness of the content of the curriculum; 11.7% saying it was not, and only 1.7% saying they were unsure (not displayed on table). The results provide a clear indication that majority of students agreed to the comprehensiveness of the existing curriculum. Nonetheless, they also believed that a lot more could be done to enhance it by way of a review. Most (42.5%) of the students recommended the inclusion of basic communication skills like reading, writing, and speaking in the new curriculum. To help improve students' reading skills, a participant suggested: *"School authorities should institute a policy that makes it obligatory for every student to have, at least, one story book."* On improving their written communication skills, the students suggested that essay writing should be encouraged. Encouraging oral presentations was also identified by the students as means of helping them overcome stage-fright and be more confident in public speaking. Grammar/syntax and mechanics were rated second with a total of 22% as a means of improving upon students' grammar for better writing and speaking skills. They emphasized the need for the teaching of concord; subject-verb agreement; ambiguity; punctuation; and prepositions since most students had difficulties in these areas. This study observed that none of the respondents spoke about listening; making one wonder whether students really recognise it as a skill that must be acquired just like any other communication skill. The minority, who felt satisfied with the existing curriculum and therefore thought it should be left unchanged, explained that all the current topics are helpful.

Students who supported the exclusion stance defended their recommendation for certain topics to be removed from the existing curriculum with some interesting arguments. For instance, they felt that poetry should be left out because it has its own language and does not contribute much to the learning of English. On grammar, they argued that articles should be left out because “*that should be learnt at the basic level of education.*” Nouns, verbs, and punctuation, they said have “somehow been understood.” Interestingly, they complained that topics like question tags, ambiguity, and concord are “*complex and confusing*” and should therefore be left out. Ironically, one argued that topics like punctuations and comprehension seem not necessary for learning and teaching English language. It is interesting to observe that the topics that were recommended for addition to the new curriculum were the very ones that were cited for removal. It is also observable that some of the reasons given as justification for exclusion of the topics sounded a rather intriguing: The fact that a topic confuses a learner does not necessarily mean it is not important and should not be learnt. Probably, that should even be the more reason why it should be learnt.

This study also sought views of teachers on the conduciveness of the EAP learning environment at CUCG. In most of the cases, the teachers corroborated the views of their students on the subject. For instance, when asked to assess the conduciveness of the existing EAP learning environment, one of the teachers interviewed conceded that it was not comfortable enough; but the other thought otherwise. Students had expressed similar sentiments earlier: Whereas some saw the environment as conducive, others disagreed. The teachers also admitted that there were not enough reference material on the EAP course for use by learners and their teachers at the university. On how they came by materials to teach and conduct research, both lecturers interviewed cited their personal libraries as the main source, with the university library and the internet constituting secondary sources.

The study also sought lecturers’ opinions on the scope and relevance of the content of the current EAP curriculum to students’ needs. In response, one of them said it was comprehensive enough for learners’ needs; while the other thought otherwise. The two gave different dates for the development of the curriculum: While one cited 2010, and that there had ever been a review since its development; the other mentioned 2012, but denied any major review since. The lecturers were then asked to make suggestions on what should be added to new curriculum in the

event of a possible review. The lecturers identified as advanced writing skills and detailed studies in grammar and literature as areas that should be introduced, if the current curriculum were to be reviewed. One of the lecturers substantiated his stance for the additional topics by pointing out that in CUCG language skills and communication skills were separate courses, with former catering for *“the grammar aspect only”*, and recommended that the inclusion in *“the written aspect in the second semester.”*

When asked to identify topics in the current curriculum that they considered less relevant and should be left out in the new one, they expressed divided opinions: While one of them felt none of the topics was less relevant or obsolete, his colleague suggested that topics like the definition of communication and types of communication were not relevant and should be left out. To help improve upon the conduciveness of the general learning environment for their students, the teachers recommended that the existing text or reference book stock at the university library should be expanded to cater for the needs of lecturers and students. It is interesting to note that the observations and subsequent recommendation made by the lecturers were similar to those made by their students. Inadequate teaching and learning materials therefore seem to constitute a major problem confronting learners and teachers of EAP at CUCG and need to be addressed to ensure quality learning experience.

Unlike the students and lecturers, the administrators were not asked direct questions on the conduciveness of the learning environment. Questions put to them were broader in scope and sought to explore general quality assurance practices in CUCG and how they affect EAP teaching and learning. The managers believed that through QA, quality standards and benchmarks for both academic and administrative activities of the university would be maintained. Learners, through the QA mechanisms put in place can report challenges regarding teaching and learning with ease to enhance quality teaching. The practice of teachers assessing their students and the vice versa serves an excellent mechanism for maintaining checks and balances in the internal QA system. The need to meet the expectations of external QA agencies like the NAB and mentoring institutions also helps enhance alertness in maintaining accepted quality standards, thereby contribute to the realization of a conducive learning environment for an EAP course which is fit for its purposes and affords learners in a PHEI environment like the

CUCG's value for money. This, they believe, was achievable through good academic leadership and governance.

Overall

The Grundtvig Learning Partnership (2009-2011) has stressed the need for maintaining a balance between a “conducive” learning environment and the utilisation of “quality assurance” tools because “[q]uality assurance tools in themselves only lead to better language teaching and learning if they are used well” (2011:21). Such tools must also be suitable (‘fit’) for the realization of the institution’s objectives. From the survey results, it is evident that CUCG students cherished a congenial teaching and learning environment in their quest for a qualitative teaching and learning experience for EAP. This study agrees with the assertion that the learning environment is not limited to the physical surroundings or milieu; but also includes “psychosocial” and “service delivery” elements that, in turn, create an enabling social climate for quality learning experience (UNICEF 2000). On the conduciveness of the EAP learning environment at CUCG, the study observed a general agreement between the teachers and their students on the need for improvement through the provision of more library space and EAP materials. This study also observed an overreliance on lecture notes by learners, argues that no matter how good the notes may be, they cannot be comprehensive enough to offer students a wider worldview in the subject area. There is also the danger of this phenomenon encouraging rote learning which can stifle students’ research initiative and limit their objectivity and mastery of the subject. On the comprehensiveness of the EAP curriculum, the students again agreed with their teachers on the subject; except that both groups of participants recommended a review to add to or subtract certain topics from it. While the teachers recommended more writing tasks, the students suggested the addition of basic communication skills, grammar, phonetics and usage and justified them accordingly. It was observed that some of the proposed additions already existed in the current curriculum. Probably what the students intended was to call for more emphasis on some of the identified topic areas.

4.3.9 Participant Views on the Relevance of Tertiary-Level English Teaching and Learning

The object this study has been to explore the application of quality assurance principles to tertiary level teaching and learning in general, and to language teaching in particular, using EAP as the unit of analysis. The importance of EAP teaching and learning in HEIs has generally been associated with its remedial, transitional, and transformational functions in the learning

experience of students, especially “freshers”. To ascertain how these functions were being carried out at CUCG and what unique quality mechanisms were in place for enhancing its teaching and learning in the institution, views of students, their teachers and managers were solicited and their responses are discussed in turn below.

The relevance of English teaching at tertiary level was massively affirmed by the CUCG students. Majority (95.8%) of CUCG students considered the teaching and learning of English at tertiary level as very essential. But for the five (4.2% of) students who declined to respond to the question; it could be concluded that the respondents were unanimous on the relevance of the subject, as no student explicitly objected. Reasons given for the relevance of English teaching at tertiary level (not displayed in tabular form), in order of importance included remediation and transition (39 %); enhancement of basic communication and linguistic skills (32%), and socio-economic reasons and universality of usage (26%). Those who did not respond to this question constituted only 3% of the total number of respondents.

On the remediation functions of EAP, the CUCG participants observed that the course was necessary because some Ghanaian students are unable to learn and understand English well at the secondary level of education, and many also stay home for long after senior secondary education before they came to the tertiary level. Their responses confirm a general observation in Ghana that many tertiary students had a weak foundation in the English language and therefore needed to be assisted to smoothly transition from how they used the language at the senior high school level to its appropriate use for academic purposes at tertiary level. Their responses also affirm a general phenomenon in the country where many a prospective tertiary student has to stay home for a year or two to write to improve upon their grades in the language in order to progress to the next level. Some of the unedited responses quoted in this thesis in themselves attest to the generally appalling writing skills of tertiary students.

By enhanced basic communication and linguistic skills, the students implied an improvement in their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills through the improvement of their grammar and vocabulary to enable them express themselves well in the community. A respondent expressed the importance of the subject this way: *“It helps one to improve upon the speaking, writing and listening skills that one already has. It helps to improve one’s grammar usage.”* Respondents also acknowledged the socio-economic benefits of learning English at tertiary level

to learners by observing that the pervasiveness of English language use in all spheres of social and academic life, makes possessing good communication skills in the language an enhancer of learners' prospects in both local and international human relations and travel opportunities. They noted that since English is not the native language of most countries, it needed to be taught and learnt to help tertiary students have command over it and to fully use it. They also observed that since tertiary education prepares people for the national development, all civilized persons, besides their native languages, should also learn English, *"and if possible, others too."* The students also acknowledged the "global lingua-franca" status of English, arguing that without English, communication with most people cannot be effective. Relating it to their academic work, one respondent observed: *"English is the backbone of every subject and so it will help us to understand other courses."* This view affirms the relevance of English language learning in Ghana, where, because of her status as a former British colony and member of the Commonwealth, English is the only official language and the main medium of instruction from upper primary to the university level.

As a means of obtaining practitioners' standpoint on the importance of English language teaching at tertiary level in Ghana, this study also solicited opinions of teachers of the subject. At the CUCG, the course lecturers interviewed during the study both affirmed its relevance. Whereas one observed that: *"English serves as a tool of communication in the academia. Students have to be competent and proficient in the use of English in their scholarly activities"*; the other felt: *"English language remains the medium of instruction at all levels of education in Ghana. It is therefore important that it is taught at the tertiary level."* The lecturers' responses show that they agreed with their students on the relevance of English teaching and learning in tertiary educational institutions in Ghana, especially when it came to its universality and status as an academic lingua franca.

Unlike their academic colleagues and students, no direct question was put to the managers on the relevance of EAP. Nonetheless, their responses to questions on quality assurance and its applicability to EAP teaching and learning affirmed their support to the view that English language education at tertiary level was relevant. One of the two administrators involved in this study had PhD in Communication Studies, and the other had two Masters: one in Public Administration and another in International Relations. They have been working in the tertiary

educational environment for an average duration of ten years. The administrators consider all the existing quality assurance principles as having an impact on quality teaching and learning in general; but, cited students' assessment of teachers as the one that directly impacts EAP learning at CUCG.

4.3.10 Observed Challenges to QA Implementation at CUCG

The study observed four main challenges militating against the smooth application of quality principles to English language teaching and learning at CUCG. This was deduced from responses from the survey and interviews as well as from personal observation. The first challenge had to do with the conduciveness of the physical learning environment. As a new campus, not only was the university yet to complete some major physical infrastructure; it also needed to provide adequate and quality teaching and learning materials for the effective teaching of EAP. Though temporary and very necessary, current construction works at the site created noise which had become a matter of concern for learners who complained about the negative effects of these activities on the serene ambiance that they so badly needed to do quality academic work. Inadequate hostel facilities and staff accommodation on campus also meant that staff and students would have to commute between Fiapre or Sunyani and the campus, which could constitute a major strain on their meager financial resources as a result of daily payment of lorry or taxi fares; not to mention the fatigue from travel.

The fact that majority of the students came from the Brong Ahafo region also heightened the tendency of L1 influencing the quality of learners' spoken communication skills in English (L2), with pronunciation being the worst affected area. Although the weekly four-hour contact with teachers for EAP lectures appeared sufficient; learners felt the existing course duration of just one academic year was not enough and should be extended to cover the entire four-year period of their studies.

As a private university, having to compete with public-funded universities and polytechnics constituted another challenge. Although the government provides some form of assistance to PHEIs in Ghana through the GETFund, it is usually minimal and mostly in the form of means of transport for students. Salaries and other overhead costs are totally borne by the private universities. Such institutions are heavily dependent on fees paid by students and research funds received from collaborating institutions. This is not the case with the public-funded universities

where fees remain highly subsidised by the state for Ghanaian students. As a result of this and in view of the comparative prestige and advantage that they enjoy, prospective students often prefer the public to private universities. Thus to survive in the keenly-contested race for students, a PHEI's chances of survival have often depended on the attractiveness of course offerings and its ability to charge realistic but moderate fees and, rather ironically, still be able to provide quality infrastructure, TLMs, and excellent tuition.

The need to meet the stringent quality requirements of state-funded QA agencies on one hand, and mentoring institutions on the other, can be expensive and challenging as well. Having to be under mentorship for at least four years before it could gain a presidential charter to award its own degrees and diplomas also implies that CUCG's institutional culture and QA initiatives could heavily be influenced by those of its mentoring institutions.

In the area of staff requirement to offer essential academic services like teaching and consultancy, PHEIs are known to depend a lot on part-time lecturers from the public universities. This practice is considered a brilliant strategy for assuring teaching quality in the PHEIs, as most of the teachers coming from the public universities are well qualified (Varghesse, 2004). This author is however of the view that overreliance on part-timers to teach various courses could constitute a quality challenge too; especially when it comes to staff retraining and attendance of meetings where policies relating to QA could be discussed. The tendency of part-timers seeing themselves as "outsiders" is also a possibility. With that mindset, part-timers' full commitment to the host PHEI's overall QA principles and internal culture could be compromised as their primary allegiance is obviously owed to institutions where they have full-time status. As a means of checking this phenomenon, CUCG authorities ensure that quality assurance decisions affect the renewal of contracts and promotions. Even though 47, representing 59% of the 79 academic staff of CUCG's are part-timers (CUCG, 2013b), subject lecturers of the EAP course were both full-time employees of the university.

4.3.11 QA Practices and Language Learning Approaches Considered Unique to CUCG

One of the main objectives of this study has been to identify some of the QA practices and language teaching and learning approaches considered unique to the Ghanaian PHEIs that participated in the study and recommend them for replication elsewhere. All three categories of

participants were thus asked questions relating to these areas and their responses are discussed in turn below, beginning with students’.

When asked to identify the common aspects of quality in English language learning for their institution that they would like to recommend to other institutions, the CUCG student respondents considered four mechanisms as key in the implementation of quality in the teaching and learning of EAP in CUCG. Their recommendations are summarized in Table F4.3-11 in Appendix F. From the table, majority (41.7%) of the students identified pedagogy as the most crucial tool for realising quality in EAP teaching. CUCG students emphasized the need for teachers to teach to the understanding of learners by occasionally varying their methodologies and materials in teaching the course. Next in importance to the students was how the EAP course is presented. This attracted 22.5% of respondents. By that the students meant that for the realisation of a worthwhile EAP learning experience, the teacher must demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the subject by teaching effectively and efficiently. The application of performance enhancing tools was identified by 20% of the respondents as the third most important means of achieving quality in EAP tuition. To achieve this, the students recommended the provision of relevant teaching and learning materials; appointment and retention of qualified and experienced professionals to teach the EAP course and ensuring effective monitoring and supervision to realize course objectives. To make sure that the necessary social climate existed for effective learning, 15.8% of the students recommended that the teacher should exhibit a positive bearing in class. In their view, not only must the teacher’s physical appearance command respect from learners; the teacher should also be punctual, understanding and approachable. This was how a participant put it: *“Dress properly to class; advise the students to learn hard; allow each student to express his/her view.”* Surprisingly, the participants in this case failed to mention the need to ensure the existence of a congenial physical environment for effective EAP teaching and learning. When their teachers were asked to suggest ways of ensuring quality teaching and learning of the subject they made the recommendations discussed in the next paragraph.

To ensure that the atmosphere for teaching and learning EAP was conducive enough, the lecturers recommended that textbooks and other reference materials should be made available. The University library should also be expanded and stocked with more reading materials to cater for the needs of lecturers and students. To achieve quality EAP tuition, CUCG teachers

recommended the communicative approach to teaching English language as a sure way. Teachers, they suggested, should make EAP lessons interactive; they should try to acquaint themselves with learners' problems and offer suggestions that can help address the problems. They also recommended that there should be more contact hours with students; while encouraging them to read novels, magazines, newspapers, and journals.

From the managers' standpoint, achieving quality in teaching and learning EAP, to a large extent, depends on diligence on the part of the subject teacher. To avoid possible lackadaisical tendencies towards work by full- and part-time academic staff, the CUCG administrators recommended that promotions and renewal of contracts take into account quality assurance reports. Even though they considered all existing quality assurance mechanisms at CUCG as having some effect on EAP teaching and learning in the institution; they identified learner-teacher assessment as the mechanism with the most direct impact. Thus, besides supervision and monitoring by external regulatory and supervisory bodies as well as mentoring institutions, there is need to ensure that students regularly appraise lecturers and courses.

4.3.12 Conclusion

The object of this study has been to explore the application of quality assurance principles in English language teaching and learning in a private higher educational setting in Ghana. Through the survey and interviews conducted at the CUCG, the study draws three main conclusions: First, students and their teachers consider English language teaching and learning at tertiary level very relevant. Participants in the study unanimously attested to the importance of teaching the subject language at tertiary level in Ghana, and identified the remediation and enhancement of basic communication and linguistic skills functions of the EAP course as the main justification for the need to put in place effective quality assurance mechanisms to enhance its teaching and learning at CUCG. Second, the study observed the existence of both internal and external quality assurance mechanisms at CUCG; however, awareness levels among some key players, especially teachers, were still quite low. The few respondents who claimed to be aware of the existence of quality models felt there was still a lot of room for improvement by way of providing staff training, quality and adequate teaching and learning materials, and adapting the current curriculum and teaching methodology to make them more student-centred. This study also observed that though the general physical and social learning environment appeared satisfactory;

learners still had some concerns about noise and distractions during lectures from moving vehicles and from other learners. From the psychosocial perspective, some learners expressed the need for more patience and tolerance from teachers, some of whom they said abused learners at the least provocation. Third, the socio-ethnic backgrounds of learners was also identified as capable of influencing their language learning, especially in the areas of grammar, pronunciation, and speaking; thereby compromising the quality of their English language.

The importance of this research to CUCG in general and EAP teachers in particular is that, with the quality concerns of learners and teachers thus highlighted, academic and administrative issues at the university can be designed to fit their intended purposes and enhance the prospects of achieving excellence there. The contribution of this study to the quality debate has been that so long as PHEIs are mentored, their institutional quality culture and other QA initiatives would be overshadowed by those of mentoring institutions. The study is also a groundbreaking one as far as research into the application of QA principles to language teaching in a PHEI in Ghana is concerned.

4.4 Case HEI IV: Islamic University College of Ghana (IUCG)

At the Islamic University College of Ghana, a sample of 104, comprising 100 students, two administrators, and two course lecturers was selected to participate in this study (3.2.3.1). They included the following:

- Vice President (Administration), and Assistant Vice President (Academic Affairs)
- Two Communication Skills/English Language Lecturers
- Students

One each of the academic and administrative staff declined to be interviewed, with eight of the student respondents also failing to complete the questionnaires. Unlike the other three case institutions, prevailing circumstances at IUCG during the author's field visit necessitated the drop-and-collect approach to administering the questionnaire to students. Details of the data collection process are discussed under Section 3.2.3.

4.4.1 Background and Context

The Islamic University College of Ghana (IUCG) was established by the Ahlul Bait Foundation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and started as an Islamic Theological institute in 1988 under the name Ahlul Bait Islamic School to provide Muslim scholars and students from Ghana and other neighbouring West African countries with facilities for research in the Islamic sciences. The university was granted interim accreditation as a private university by the NAB in 2001 to begin a four-year Bachelor of Arts programme in Islamic Religious Studies. A year later, it was granted accreditation to run a four-year degree programme in Business Administration. Currently, IUCG has four departments: Department of Business Administration, Department of Religious Studies, Department of Computing, and the Department of Languages. It has a total workforce of 41 comprising 22 full-time academic and 19 administrative staff. The university also has 18 part-time teachers (82 percent of the total academic staff) for various programmes (Fieldwork, 2012). Currently, IUCG has a full-time student population of 800 registered for the 2011/2012 academic year. As is the practice in most tertiary educational institutions in Ghana, it is obligatory that all first-year students take a course in Language and Communication Skills (i.e. English for Academic Purposes, EAP). However, in what appears to be rather unique to IUCG,

the course is structured in a manner that aspects of it are taken throughout the four-year duration of undergraduate programmes.

Located at the Adjiringano suburb of Accra in the national capital, IUCG finds itself in a fast-growing community. The university campus is thus walled to prevent encroachment. At the time of fieldwork for this study, lots of constructional activities were going on in the neighborhoods, but not within the campus as all major buildings had been completed and were in use. The main buildings within the IUCG campus include a twin two-storey lecture hall complex, an administration block, two blocks of students' hostels, (two others were outside the university premises), and a mosque. There was no staff accommodation on campus at the time of fieldwork for this study. To provide office space for lecturers, some of the rooms on the first floor of the lecture hall complex have been converted into offices. Lecturers' offices and the library were all temporarily housed in parts of the lecture hall complex. IUCG's immediate competitors in the provision of tertiary education in the metropolis are the University of Ghana, Valley View University, Accra Polytechnic and several other public and private tertiary educational institutions. Statistics from the 2010 Ghana Population and Housing Census put the population of the Accra metropolis at approximately 1,848,614, about 46.1% of the total regional population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). In terms of climate, the region lies within the southeastern coastal plain of Ghana noted for its high temperatures, sometimes reaching a maximum of 40 degrees Celsius, for most parts of the year. The region experiences a rather low and erratic rainfall pattern, with the period between September and November usually recording the highest amount of rainfall in the year. As a result of the unreliable nature of the rainfall pattern in the region, farming is not an attractive occupation. Salt winning and fishing are the main occupations of the people (NALAG, 2012).

4.4.2 IUCG: Mission and Strategy

IUCG aims to maintain a congenial atmosphere for interactive academic work to produce graduates that “would be shining examples of morality, well integrated into society and desirous of further research” (ICUG, 2011a). To realise this aim, the university's mission is to:

- train the youth to qualify as professional men and women;
- provide opportunities for academic and professional development of the youth;

- Nurture/produce mature individuals who have broad-base knowledge and appreciation of all existing religions;
- produce specialists in Administration, Banking, Economics, Secular and Islamic Law to provide honest and selfless manpower resources.

As a faith-based educational institution, IUCG's vision and strategic mission are propelled by its core values which are conspicuously spelt out in the mission statement: morality; honesty; commitment; tolerance; selflessness; and holistic education. As a private university the CUCG is funded mainly by the Ahlul Bait Foundation and students' fees. Unlike the public universities, where fees are highly subsidized by the state, students enrolling in private universities like IUCG are required to pay "realistic" fees.

Even though EAP is not specifically cited in its mission, vision and goals, it is clear that the overall aim of the university is the provision of quality teaching and learning in all programmes offered in the institution, EAP inclusive. To determine the extent of IUCG's success or otherwise in implementing quality in teaching and learning in general, and in EAP in particular, it would be important to assess how far it has realised its declared mission and objectives.

Factors Influencing IUCG's Culture

IUCG's culture is foremost defined by its status as a faith-based private university. IUCG's status as a private university requires that it be affiliated to an accredited state-funded university for, at least, four years before it can be granted a presidential charter to award its own degrees and diplomas. For instance, graduates of the IUCG shall receive certificates of the University of Ghana, its mentoring institution, until it is granted a presidential charter (NAB, 2010). In conformity with this accreditation requirement, IUCG is affiliated to the University of Ghana and the Islamic College for Advanced Studies, London. Though the cultures of the mentoring universities can affect IUCG's, the institution has some distinctive values. What then makes IUCG unique from other tertiary educational institutions in Ghana? The manager interviewed at IUCG considered the culture of the university as being influenced foremost by the following:

- cosmopolitan leadership;
- examination results;
- external expectations.

This means that IUCG's culture is influenced by an intrinsically interwoven set of external and internal expectations. Internally, "cosmopolitan leadership" would ensure the achievement of the university's mission of diversity and tolerance in a multicultural environment; quality teaching, learning, and assessment for positive outcomes in the form of examination results, which, as he put it: *"In the case of IUCG, examination is key."* To meet external expectations, the institution is also required to abide by quality standards stipulated by the NAB for privately owned HEIs in Ghana. That apart, IUCG is expected to recognise tertiary norms defined by the NCTE and mentoring institutions. As a member of the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the Ghana Association of Private Universities, IUCG is also obliged to abide by rules regulating the operations of their membership to ensure quality standards.

4.4.3 Implementing QA for Quality at IUCG

"Quality," in the context of IUCG, is understood as the existence of a congenial atmosphere for interactive academic work to produce graduates who are shining examples of morality; well integrated into society, and keen on further research (IUCG, 2011). To achieve its quality objectives, the university has in place both internal and external QA mechanisms. Internally, IUCG is yet to set up a QA Unit. The absence of an internal unit charged with the responsibility of coordinating QA activities in the university did not imply the absence of internal quality assurance mechanisms. IUCG has in place a management and governance hierarchy comprising the Governing Council, Executive Committee, Academic Board, and other statutory committees of the board. These bodies contribute to ensuring that internal quality principles are strictly adhered to. IUCG also has criteria for quality recruitment, training, retraining, promotion, retention, and sanctioning of staff and students similar to those of other higher educational institutions in Ghana. Student enrollment is guided by norms defined by external public-funded QA bodies like the NCTE, the NAB, and mentoring universities that applicants meet certain basic requirements like a minimum grade of C6 in relevant core and elective subjects before they are offered a place on various programmes. Periodic external audits and inspections at IUCG are usually conducted by the NAB and the monitoring universities, particularly the Universities of Ghana. Staff and students sitting professional examinations not directly under the purview of these bodies are required to observe quality standards set by the relevant professional bodies (1.2.2).

Participant perspectives on quality assurance and control processes at IUCG

Views of respondents were sought on the processes of assessing good teaching in their institution. They were also asked to comment on tools used in the assessment and evaluation process, and identify existing mechanisms for effective quality control and implementation at IUCG. Their views are discussed in turn.

Student participants from IUCG identified periodic appraisal and observation as the two main tools for assessing and evaluating quality teaching and learning in the institution. Their observations are summarized in Table G4.4-1 in Appendix G. The results show that majority (81.8%) of the students identified observation as the most frequently used assessment tool at IUCG. They imply by “observation”, looking out for excellence in the lecturer’s pedagogical/delivery skills; demonstrated in the ability to teach to the understanding of learners; relevance or practicality of lessons; student participation in class; regular assessment of learners, and student or graduate performance. Other qualities observed include the lecturer’s consistency, punctuality, and regularity in class attendance. As a language course, respondents observed that: *“The teacher’s ability to speak well the language of his subject and students’ performance in his/her subject”* were also looked out for. Next in importance to periodic assessment or appraisal is observation, which attracted 18.2% of the responses. This involves asking students to appraise their teachers by assessing the appropriateness of reference books and the quality of lesson notes. On specific tools currently in use at IUCG, the students identified appraisal using questionnaires, surveys, or observation to assess the quality of the teacher’s pedagogy, ability to meet syllabus deadlines, self-expression, students’ assessment and outcome. It also involves assessing the quality of teaching and learning materials and equipment, as well as the general conduciveness of the physical learning environment, especially the quality of furniture in the classrooms.

The course lecturer observed that students’ progress in IUCG is evaluated through classroom assessment and quizzes. Writing, grammar, and usage drills are organised for learners on weekly basis to assess how they are doing in the course. On the evaluation of good teaching, *“assessment of lecture notes and methodology”* was identified as one of the existing tools. Students, he said, are also made to periodically assess the competence of teachers/lecturers. The observations of the teachers, especially student-teacher assessment, affirmed the views of their students on some of the existing assessment tools at IUCG.

Like the students and their course lecturer, an educational manager interviewed at IUCG also attested to the existence of mechanisms at the university for implementing QA. As far as systems for self-evaluation at the individual and institutional levels were concerned, the respondent hinted that it was still *“in the pipeline.”* However, as an interim measure, *“[m]anagement sometimes does random checks. This is done through a five-minute interaction with employees.”* On the mechanisms applied at the institutional level, the respondent identified *“brainstorming at the office for at least five minutes.”* On inspections and their impact on quality at IUCG this study noted that in the context of IUCG as a private university, inspection is done by external bodies such as audit teams from the University of Ghana or the NAB. Concerning the impact of the pre- and post-inspection processes on IUCG, the administrator observed that: *“In most cases, inspection is done at the beginning, middle and later part of the academic year.”* Although his response only stated the periods for inspection and not the impact on IUCG’s activities, it was deducible from the statement: *“Learners have confidence in what they are learning and very sure of the quality of lecturers”* that the inspections impacted positively on teaching and learning.

Overall, all three categories of participants in this study agreed on the existence of mechanisms such as student-teacher assessment and observation for implementing QA at IUCG; though the administrator conceded that systems for self-evaluation were yet to be put in place. Brainstorming which was cited by the administrator as one of the internal QA mechanisms in IUCG has been identified as one of the basic problem-solving tools adopted by organisations to come out with ideas and possible solutions and has been described as a master key to all the mechanisms used in generating ideas for quality assurance (Mishra, 2006). Despite its wide applicability, it has been criticised for being deficient in providing objective assessment. As a private university, it is obvious that mentoring institutions also play a vital role in the quality assurance and control activities. It was therefore surprising that participants failed to cite them.

Applying QA principles for effective EAP teaching and learning at IUCG

As part of the main objectives of this study, the researcher sought to establish the effectiveness of EAP teaching and learning at IUCG through the assessment of learner satisfaction. Survey participants, particularly students, were asked to rate the gap between their expectations before they took the course and their actual experience after taking the course. A correlation analysis

was employed to determine whether learners' expectations in the EAP course had indeed been met. This is illustrated in Table G4.4-2 of Appendix G. The results portray a significant correlation between the achievement of EAP (termed as Language and Communication) course objectives and the meeting of student expectations in the course (Pearson = 1.000, sig-value = 0.000). As course objectives (of improvement in students' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills) are being achieved, student expectations from the EAP course are also being met. This is because the sig-value of 0.000 is less than the alpha value of 0.01. There is therefore enough evidence to conclude that there is a significant relationship between the achievement of EAP course objectives and meeting student expectations in the course.

Standards serving as benchmarks for EAP teaching and learning at IUCG

As a means to providing subject benchmarks for evaluating the quality of the EAP course, it was deemed necessary to ascertain what constituted the standards. Views of all three categories of participants involved in this study were therefore sought on this subject. Their various standpoints are discussed in turn, beginning with students'.

When IUCG students were asked to identify the various approaches for ensuring quality language teaching in their institution, none of the 88 participants involved in the survey identified the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as a standard for assessing the quality of language teaching in their institution. Instead, they identified the following as standards serving as benchmarks for quality EAP teaching and learning: 1) student participation in class; 2) examinations; 3) availability of quality materials including handouts for the enhancement of learning and, 4) the appointment of competent and fulltime lecturers. One of them who seemed to disagree observed: *"If there exists any, it's poor."*

When asked about subject standards serving as benchmarks for EAP teaching and learning at IUCG, the lecturer interviewed declined to comment. That did not however suggest that such standards were non-existent in the institution though. At least, the EAP course has its own objectives, which serve as quality standards serving as benchmarks for the subject. They include the following:

To help learners be able to:

- develop writing skills through process writing which involves: pre-drafting, drafting, re-writing and revising.
- Improve students' skills in (i) summarising extracts and essays; (ii) simplifying texts of moderate complexity; and (iii) writing both explanatory and argumentative synthesis of selected texts.
- identify the appropriate form of language (i.e. register) suitable for different audience types and purposes;
- write with concision and coherence, using logical methods of development and,
- construct sentences that are consistent with intention and stylistic choice (IUCG, 2010b).

On factors determining the choice of these subject standards, and whether they were effective at enhancing EAP teaching in IUCG, the teacher again failed to respond. Nonetheless, the reasons might not have been any different from those that informed the choice of similar standards in the other case institutions, which included the enhancement of the communication and general linguistic skills of learners, remediation, and transition. It was obvious that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was not in use here too, as neither the teacher nor students made any reference to it.

As persons in charge of the institution's policy documents, and thus assigned to their dissemination, this study interviewed one of the managers on QA policies and how they impacted EAP teaching and learning. The manager identified class evaluation by students during lectures and examinations as one of the policies impacting the quality of teaching and learning the subject at IUCG. Like the other two categories of participants from the institution, the manager did not mention the CEFR.

Overall

None of the participants in this study cited the CEFR as a standard providing subject benchmarks for EAP teaching and learning at IUCG. It is however noteworthy that the objectives of the EAP course cited earlier in this study are similar to the general language learning competences of the individual learner as outlined in the CEFR. While the manager student-teacher appraisal during lectures, the students felt their performance in class, the availability of teaching and learning materials, and the appointment of full-time professional teachers to handle the EAP course could serve as standards. What this study finds surprising is the failure of the teacher to comment on

such an important issue as subject benchmarks for evaluating the course. Responses of student participants also tended to emphasize performance enhancement tools for the course rather than specific standards like those outlined in the course objectives.

4.4.4 Respondents' Perspectives on "High quality" Teaching

As acknowledged earlier in this study, the term "quality" has been subjected to different definitions based on settings or mindsets (4.1.6). This researcher concedes that qualifying it with an adjective like "high" renders its definition even more difficult to attempt. Thus, this study is not intended to offer an alternative definition; but to identify other possible themes from subjects of this study.

Student participants were asked to explain what they understood by "high quality" teaching and how that can be achieved within EAP learning. A summary of their views is presented in Table G4.4-3 in Appendix G. The students considered "high quality" tuition as: *"making language learning more practical than theory and by making available all English books to students."* Statistics from the table show that majority (59.1%) of learners considered the learning environment as the most crucial factor for the realization of "high quality" tuition. To them, "high quality" teaching is achievable in an atmosphere where *"all necessary equipment that we need to suit the tuition is provided."* In the words of one respondent: *"It is when the money paid is very high but comes with quality teaching."* The views expressed by the students interestingly encapsulate the key concepts of quality, particularly "value for money," "fitness for/of purpose," and "customer expectation and satisfaction." They also signaled the awareness by learners that opting to study in a PHEI came with higher financial demands by way of fees and other requirements; which in turn meant that the institution must also fulfill its part of the quality contract by providing value for money. The IUCG participants in the survey considered the teacher's bearing in class as the second key ingredient for achieving quality tuition in EAP, as 22.7% of them identified this. To them, a positive bearing that can engender "high quality" tuition is one that shows that the teacher is *"well-versed"* in the subject, patient, open-minded, and *"appreciates the views of his/her students."* The third desirable means of achieving "high quality" tuition according to 18.2% of the respondents was pedagogy. In their view, a rewarding teaching and learning experience can be achieved, if there is a pedagogical paradigm that ensures an active learner participation in class that is complemented by quality assessment (examination)

to measure the extent of achievement of course objectives. They further asserted that *“all the teaching tools should be used at the appropriate time in one’s lessons.”* Somehow, the survey participants failed to mention course presentation or mode of delivery.

The IUCG students also considered the discussion of marked scripts in class by their teachers after assignments and assessments as another tool for the realization of “high quality” tuition. Their views on the subject were strongly affirmed by an overwhelming majority (90.9%) of the respondents when they were asked whether their language and communication lecturers discussed marked scripts with them. Only 9.1% disagreed. On whether their teachers used suggestions from the discussions to improve on future examination questions or not, majority of IUCG respondents said they were unsure. It would be recalled that learners from this institution had earlier identified teachers appreciating the views of their students as one of the key elements of “high quality” tuition. As to whether they were able to meet their teachers outside regular lecture sessions to discuss issues relating to the EAP course or not, majority of IUCG students responded in the affirmative.

The EAP lecturer considered “high quality” tuition as *“a practice that reflects the concept of value for money.”* To achieve “high quality” tuition, he suggested the appointment of *“outstanding teachers”* to handle the students well. This recommendation by the teacher confirmed earlier suggestions by students for a similar intervention. They also considered the appointment of *“competent”* and *“permanent”* (i.e. fulltime) teachers as one of the means to achieving high quality tuition in IUCG.

From the administrator’s perspective, achieving “high quality” tuition is a collective responsibility involving management, teachers, and students. The only respondent from IUCG observed that the existing QA mechanisms of tasking academic heads of department with the monitoring of the implementation of quality policies; management working hand-in-hand with students in the assessment of quality; and the periodic evaluation of teachers and courses by students during lectures and examinations, all contributed to the realization of “high quality” tuition in the institution. Overall, the relevance of these findings to current research in the area cannot be overemphasized. Earlier studies have shown that students generally welcome feedback.

4.4.5 Participant Self-evaluation: Lecturers and Learners

In view of the apparent dearth of direct involvement of administrators in language teaching, they were excluded from the self-evaluation. It was limited to the course lecturer and students. The results of the self-assessments are discussed below, beginning with students'.

On how they would rate their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills on the scale: excellent, very good, good and weak, the IUCG students evaluated themselves as summarised in Table G4.4-4 of Appendix G. From the table, majority of the students from both year-groups (First year: 82, 74, 70, 64%; and Continuing: 63, 75, 74, and 68%) rated their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills as good. Other respondents in either case (First year: 8, 6, 12, 8%; Continuing: 18, 10, 15, and 18 %) also considered their skills in these areas as very good; while a few others from both groups (First year: 2; 1; 8; and 2%; Continuing: 7, 5, 2, and 6%) felt it was excellent. Respondents from either group also reported some handicaps in these skills. While the continuing students identified reading as their worst skill (with 13% of respondents); followed by writing skills (10 %); listening (9%), and speaking (8%); first-year students cited speaking as their least improved skill (26%), followed by writing (19 %), listening (10%), and reading (8 %). In terms of learners' self-evaluated perceptions, the results present a generally positive picture of the impact of the course on learners.

As a means of verifying the students' claim, the view of the course teacher was also sought. On the extent of achievement of quality objectives at IUCG, the subject lecturer who was interviewed declined to respond. When requested to assess the course-inception capabilities of his learners, he cited *"poor grammar and inadequate vocabulary"* as the major course-initial challenges of students. Asked whether he had observed any improvements in the general communication and linguistic skills of learners since they started taking the EAP course, the lecturer responded in the affirmative. As to how course-initial challenges of the learners were addressed, the teacher said students were given compulsory weekly exercises in grammar and the reading of classical literature. On ways of enhancing English language teaching at tertiary level in Ghana, he recommended that *"the focus of the course should rest more on communicative abilities of learners instead of linguistic knowledge."* He also advocated *"a shift from exam passing to general language acquisition."*

Overall

The generally satisfactory assessment of learners' communication skills in English is a positive indication of customer satisfaction and a confirmation of the achievement of the EAP course objectives at IUCG. The acknowledgement of varying degrees of weaknesses in all four skill areas by the students suggested the persistence of some of their problems in the English language, requiring a lot more to be done to attain excellence in its teaching and learning in the institution. It however contrasts the teacher's claim that learners' main challenges in grammar and vocabulary had been addressed through "*weekly grammar exercises and (compulsory) reading of classical books and other materials as assignments.*"

4.4.6 Respondents' Perspective on a "Good Teacher"

To ascertain from EAP learners of IUCG and their managers what their views were about the "good teacher", two questions each were put them. Teachers were left out of this in order to ensure a more neutral and much fairer and independent assessment of these key players at the centre of knowledge transmission and acquisition. IUCG learners' and the institution's perspectives on a good teacher are discussed below.

Participants were given the opportunity to identify any three attributes they considered as qualities of a "good teacher." As a means of establishing from learners what attributes they considered most essential and desirable of a "good teacher" the same question was posed twice to the students. Tables G4.4-5a and b in Appendix G summarise the attributes the IUCG students deem most desirable in a "good teacher." From the results, teacher's general demeanour in class was rated as the most desirable attribute by majority (45.5%) of the IUCG students. This was followed in importance by pedagogical skills which 24% of the respondents considered desirable. The mode of delivering the course followed in importance with 18.2% of respondents affirming its relevance. How the course is presented drew the least number (9.1%) of respondents. Juxtaposing the above results with those in Table G4.4-5b yielded some interesting recurrence in the findings. It can be observed from the two sets of results that teacher's demeanour in class maintained its place as the most desirable quality of a good teacher in both tables, increasing its rating from 45.5% to 76.1%. Pedagogy also maintained its rating as the second most desirable quality of a good teacher in both tables with 27.3% and 23.9% respectively. Mode of delivery and course presentation were not rated at all in Table 4.4-6b. On

how a “good teacher” can be determined, the IUCG student respondents made some interesting observations, three of which are cited verbatim here:

1. *“Students must be good speakers of the language; students must do relatively well in the exams; the kind of examination questions set must meet standards; teacher’s lecture notes must meet standards.”*
2. *“A good teacher must understand his subject and communicate it well to the understanding of students, make all students fully participate in his teaching process.”*
3. *“Good communication skills/understands the language of his subject; timely assignments for students; evaluating and discussing with students their errors after marked scripts.”*

These observations by the learners aptly expressed three main criteria for determining a good teacher: teachers’ mastery of course (or professionalism); pedagogy; and students’ performance. Asked whether their EAP teachers exhibited these qualities or not, the IUCG students gave a generally positive rating as majority (90.9%) of them affirmed that their teacher possessed these attributes, with only 9.1% of them objecting to that assertion. This positive evaluation of the EAP teacher by the students is very significant for the course as a whole, as the quality of a course to a large extent depends on the quality of teachers who handle it.

The EAP course in IUCG is handled by two people, both of whom at the time of fieldwork for this study had Masters in aspects of English Language. The lecturer who was interviewed in this study had Masters in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). It was not possible for the researcher to establish the qualification of other lecturer who opted out. Table G4.4-6 of Appendix G gives some details on their experiences in tertiary level teaching.

The two teachers who taught EAP were both of the rank of lecturer with a mean experience of one year in tertiary level teaching. Like the other three case institutions, IUCG is a fairly young institution. There were no senior lecturers. The average teaching experience depicted above may be less impressive; but understandable, considering the fact that the institution itself is young. To ascertain whether learners at IUCG considered experience an important quality of a “good teacher”, questionnaire of the Grundtvig Learning Partnership (2009-2011) was slightly modified

for use based on the Likert scale: essential, important, might be important, and no response. Table G4.4-7 of Appendix G portrays views of learners on the subject.

From the statistics, majority (42%) of the students felt that experience is an important determinant of a “good teacher”. Those who considered as essential represented 35.2 percent of the respondents; while those who felt it was might be important constituted 6.8%. Students who thought it no important at all represented 2.3% of the total number of respondents; with those declining to respond representing 13.6%. The results show that the IUCG students regard teacher’s experience a significant element in ensuring that learners enjoy a rewarding learning experience.

On what makes a “good teacher,” the same question that was put to students was repeated as the opening question in the interview with the administrator. The IUCG manager shared the views of the students regarding what they considered as the attributes of a “good teacher” as he observed:

A good teacher in the eyes of the Islamic University College is a teacher who is committed to his work; imparts the required knowledge in such a manner that the receivers are satisfied. This teacher is also ethically concerned.

On determining a “good teacher”, the administrator pointed out that students are made to assess the teacher, after which the assessment is evaluated and the results presented to management for effective decision making. This affirms IUCG’s commitment towards maintaining basic quality standards in carrying out its core activities of teaching and learning.

Overall

Like the students, the administrator believed in the “fitness for purpose” and the “excellence” or “customer satisfaction” dimensions of quality. A “good teacher” must therefore demonstrate, not only commitment to work, but also strive to exceed the expectation of customers, the students. The results further demonstrate the IUCG students’ appreciation of EAP teachers who not only exhibit positive bearings in class, but also possess good pedagogical skills that contribute to the realization of a congenial social climate for quality student learning experience. A closer look at the raw data revealed that punctuality and patience and the ability to teach to the understanding are specific qualities that the learners highly cherish. On how a “good teacher” can be

determined, the IUCG administrator was more generic in his response, citing student-teacher assessment and subsequent evaluation of results by management. The students, on the other hand, were more specific and result-oriented; looking out for a teacher whose professionalism and pedagogical skills can help learners acquire the relevant competencies in the course.

4.4.7 Perspectives on the Conduciveness of the Learning Environment

This study agrees to the assertion that the learning environment is not limited to the physical surroundings or milieu, but a combination of “psychosocial” and “service delivery” elements that, in turn, create an enabling social climate for quality learning experience (UNICEF 2000). Views of student participants and their course teacher were thus discussed within this context. The option of assessing the conduciveness of the learning environment was not available for the administrator.

The students were asked to assess both the physical and social climates of their learning environment and how they impact on the quality of EAP learning in their institution. Table G4.4-8 of Appendix G presents a summary of views of survey participants on the conduciveness of their learning environment. Of the 88 respondents, 54 (representing 61.4%) expressed satisfaction with the conduciveness of their learning environment. The number of those who said they were dissatisfied with the environment was 34, constituting 38.6% of respondents. Those who felt IUCG’s environment was conducive enough for the EAP course cited both physical and social environmental factors like:

- Lecturer’s positive bearing, expertise, and availability; saying: *“Yes; because our English lecturer is an expert in the course and accommodating.”*
- A serene environment, void of distractions;
- Availability of teaching and learning materials: a well-stocked library and audio-visual equipment; affirming: *“Yes. English is learnt through careful listening and there are microphones which aid listening;”*

From the survey results, it is evident that the IUCG students rate highly a congenial teaching and learning environment as a tool for the realization of quality teaching and learning experience for EAP. Nonetheless, some respondents reported of large class sizes for English; lack of practice during lessons; and the need for more materials. They observed that:

- *“The class is normally very huge: hosting more than 170 students.”*
- *“Students do not introduce or practice their linguistic knowledge during lesson.”*
- *“There should be more materials for further learning and better understanding.”*

The fact that nearly a quarter of the respondents complained about some inadequacies in the system affirmed the need for more to be done at IUCG for quality enhancement.

The library plays a crucial role in quality teaching and learning. Access to good library facilities and services thus constitutes an integral part of quality assurance. To measure the level of students' satisfaction with existing library facilities at IUCG, the students were asked to do a general assessment of the quality and adequacy of their library in terms of services and relevant reference materials for their courses on the scale: Satisfactory; somehow satisfactory; unsatisfactory; and: Very adequate; adequate and Inadequate respectively, and how up-to-date materials are. Their responses are summarized in Tables G4.4-9a and b in Appendix G.

The statistics show that majority of learners generally expressed satisfaction with library facilities and services. Those who thought otherwise constituted the minority. This implied that learners still expect to see some improvement in the current service delivery and provision of library materials in the university. On the up-to-datedness of reference materials, the students unanimously observed that all available books were published before 2009 and thus were not current enough.

The study further sought to confirm the sources of relevant information by students by asking the respondents to indicate how they obtained relevant information on the course. The results showed that lecture notes constitute the main source of relevant information on the EAP course for most (44.3%) of the IUCG students. Textbooks from the university library represent only 25.0 percent of source material, with the Internet and public library constituting 21.6 and 9.1% respectively. None of the students cited personal library. What the study finds interesting about the results is that despite the generally positive assessment of library facilities and students' attendance, majority of learners still relied on lecture notes. This phenomenon, it is feared, can lead to rote learning and limit student objectivity.

Access to a reliable campus-wide internet service has of recent become a basic necessity and not luxury. IUCG students who participated in this study affirmed the availability of internet connectivity on their campus, with majority of them being computer literate and familiar with sourcing information online. In spite of the availability of internet connectivity on campus, a significant number of students still relied on other sources for internet access.

4.4.8 Assessing the EAP Curriculum

The curriculum provides generally outlines the course objectives that teachers and learners are required to meet by the end of the course. Thus, it provides subject benchmarks necessary for quality assessment. This study found it expedient to ask participants to assess the suitability of the EAP curriculum used in their institution. This option was limited to students and their lecturers as it was considered an area that the two categories of participants are directly involved in.

Respondents were given the opportunity to assess the content and relevance of the existing EAP curriculum. On the scope and relevance of the EAP curriculum used at IUCG, 86.4% of the students said the content of the curriculum was comprehensive enough; while in the view of 13.6%, it was not. The results indicate that majority of students felt the existing curriculum was comprehensive enough. Nonetheless, the fact that some of their colleagues objected to its comprehensiveness meant that more should be done to enhance it. Participants felt the need for a review of the existing curriculum, and recommended the following as topics that should be introduced into the curriculum, in case of a review: syntax, usage, and phonetics by 46.6% majority, and basic communication skills by the remaining 41%. Specifically, they recommended the inclusion of:

- sentence construction;
- writing: letters, articles; debates;
- grammar: concord, modifiers, adjuncts, passive and impassive forms of speech, transitive and intransitive verbs, finite and infinite verbs;
- literature

It is observable that aspects of the proposed additions exist in the current curriculum. Their identification by the students therefore suggests a need for more emphasis on some of the

identified topic areas rather than fresh introductions. The students justified the inclusion (or emphasis) of these topic areas, arguing that the grammar topics in particular constituted the basis of English language and very relevant. A respondent observed that: *“Many students still speak poor English, with very bad sentence constructions; they cannot write good letters and even answer essay-type exam questions. Introducing this will help them improve.”* On the introduction of debate writing into the curriculum, they explained that it was needful because it enhanced one’s confidence and “charisma.” Their recommendations seemed to centre on reading, writing, and speaking only, leaving out listening. This makes one wonder whether students really recognised listening as a skill that needed to be acquired just like the other communication skills. The small minority, who expressed satisfaction with the existing curriculum and therefore felt reviewing it was not necessary failed to offer any justification for their stance.

Their colleagues who supported the exclusion stance defended their recommendation for the removal of certain topics from the existing curriculum with some interesting arguments which are quoted here verbatim:

- *“Topics like morphemes must not be taught for a whole semester while other more important language skills topics are not taught;”*
- *“Word formation. This is because it is confusion even though it is known to everyone and used, students find it difficult to explain it;”*
- *“Morphemes, articles, auxiliary verbs, nouns, pronouns, and adjectives. Because these are primary topics.”* (Probably implying “too elementary”)

It is observable that some of the reasons given as justification for exclusion of certain topics sounded rather interesting: The fact that a topic confuses a learner is certainly not enough justification for its removal from the curriculum. There could be very genuine reasons for their stance, but the arguments raised above rather suggest a need for adapting teaching methods and not the outright removal of the said topics. On the frequency of EAP lectures per week, the IUCG students said they received tuition twice or three times a week.

On the conduciveness of the learning environment at IUCG, the teacher corroborated the views of the students on the subject. For instance, the teacher affirmed that the environment was comfortable enough, and like the students also recommended that more teaching and learning materials on the EAP course be made available for use by learners and their teachers at the university. He also advocated the breaking of large classes into smaller ones, just as the students had earlier recommended. On how teachers came by materials to teach and conduct research, the lecturer cited personal libraries as the main source, with the university library and the internet constituting secondary sources. On the scope and relevance of the content of the current EAP curriculum to students' needs, the teacher affirmed its comprehensiveness in meeting learner needs. He added that the curriculum, which was developed in 2010, was yet to witness any major review, recommending that in the event of a review parallel structure, word formation, and technical writing should be introduced. The teacher however declined to comment on topics in the current curriculum considered less relevant and should be left out in the new one.

Overall

In assessing the quality of a course, it is important to take into account the objectives that constituting the benchmarks, hence the seeking of learners and teachers' views on the relevance of the EAP curriculum used at IUCG. This study observed that the CEFR was not in use at this university too. The objectives of the EAP curriculum thus served as the main subject benchmarks. Though the existing curriculum appeared to be quite recent (2010); the desire by the students to see it reviewed should be given serious attention. This is because language is dynamic and education itself is trendy. This study also observed that compared to the other case institutions, the IUCG students had the most contact hours and the longest duration for the EAP course. Unlike in most tertiary institutions in Ghana (where the Language and Communication Skills (EAP) is taken for one academic year) the IUCG students have the advantage of taking the course four years, an aspect for each year. An interesting contradiction the study observed was that "word formation", one of the topics that learners felt should be left out of the new curriculum because it was difficult to understand and confused them was recommended for addition by their teacher. The students however agreed with their teacher on the need to give prominence to writing in the new curriculum. On the conduciveness of the general learning environment, there is need for maintaining a balance between a "conductive" learning environment and the utilisation of "quality assurance" tools has been stressed. This is because

“[q]uality assurance tools in themselves only lead to better language teaching and learning if they are used well” (Grundtvig Learning Partnership 209-2011:21). This study asserts that effective QA implementation thrives on the availability and utility of both human and material resources, since it is one thing for the materials to be available; and another for them to be qualitative and utilizable. The acknowledgement by the students of the existence of these vital elements in the institution affirms IUCG’s commitment towards providing quality education.

4.4.9 Participant Views on the Relevance of Tertiary-Level English Teaching and Learning

To ascertain the uses that the EAP course was being put to at the IUCG and to assess the quality mechanisms in place for enhancing its teaching and learning in the institution, views of students, their teachers, and managers were solicited. Their responses are discussed in turn below.

Student respondents from IUCG unanimously affirmed the relevance of English teaching and learning at tertiary level. Three main reasons were cited to justify their stance. In order of importance, the students identified the following factors as basis for subscribing to EAP teaching and learning at tertiary level in Ghana:

- Enhancement of basic communication and linguistic skills (63.6%)
- Remediation and transmission (18.2%);
- Socio-economic reasons and universality of usage (18.2%).

From the results, it is observable that majority of the respondents consider EAP important foremost because it enhances learners’ basic communication and linguistic skills; while the remediation and socio-economic functions of EAP were rated equally by the participants. Quoted verbatim below are three justifications for their responses:

- *“English is very important at this level because it is in the tertiary that the subject is waded more deeply into for a student to be equipped well with the language skills for their use of the world of business or in their everyday life.”*
- *“This is because it improves the communication level between students. It also helps differentiate between tertiary students and secondary students.”*

- *“Because it helps individuals to get a good job and also make communication effective and easier at our workplaces.”*

By ‘enhanced basic communication and linguistic skills,’ the students implied an improvement in their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills through the enhancement of their grammar and vocabulary to enable them express themselves well in society. The quotes above affirm an existing reality in Ghana where it has been observed that many tertiary students had weak foundations in the English language at the basic and secondary levels and therefore needed to be assisted to smoothly transition from what they were used to at the senior high school level to its appropriate use for academic and other purposes at tertiary level. This provides a strong justification for its teaching and learning at that level, as some of the unedited responses quoted in this thesis also confirm. Respondents also acknowledged the socio-economic importance of English learning at tertiary level to learners. The students identified the job opportunities that possessing good communication skills in the English language could open up to them as one of its advantages. They also acknowledged its usefulness as an enhancer of workplace communication. As a means of obtaining practitioner’s standpoint on the importance of English language teaching at tertiary level in Ghana, this study also solicited opinions of teachers of the course. Their responses are discussed in the next paragraph.

The course lecturer affirmed the relevance of teaching and learning English at tertiary level saying: *“It promotes the communicative competence of students and equips them with writing skills for assignments.”* His response represents a firm agreement with the students on the relevance of taking the course at tertiary level in Ghana, especially when it comes to its remediation, job-prospect, and communication-skill enhancement roles.

Overall

The importance of the teaching and learning of EAP in HEIs has generally been tied to its remedial, transitional, and transformational functions in the learning experience of students, especially “freshers” (Robison, 1991). In assessing the quality of the EAP course at IUCG, the lecturer observed that not only was learners’ grammar poor; their vocabulary was also not rich either. Environmental, ethnic, and socio-linguistic elements were cited as factors responsible for this phenomenon. It was acknowledged that as a multilingual society, learners’ ethnic, linguistic and social backgrounds could influence the quality of their English language learning. It was also

noted that though the backgrounds of students could play a positive role in their language learning by “*enhancing communication among them and providing platforms for errors and error analysis,*” it could negatively affect some aspects of their communication skills. Writing and speaking in particular were cited as the worst affected aspects of the learners’ English. These observations strongly affirm earlier assertions in Chapter One of this thesis, and the acknowledgement by some student subjects of this study that this phenomenon is real. With a significant number of survey participants coming from the Greater Accra Region, it was obvious that their L1 would be Ga or Dangme. Speakers of Ga in Ghana are noted for the tendency to process the sound /h/ as mute just like in French. Thus, the sentence: “How are you?” read or said by learner of Ga origin with a very strong L1 accent would be perceived as: “*Awa you?*” Within the broader context EAP research, results of this study surprisingly resemble those of a similar study that was undertaken by Evans and Green (2007) to assess the linguistic challenges of Cantonese-speaking students at the largest English-medium university in Hong-Kong discussed earlier.

4.4.10 Observed Challenges to QA Implementation at IUCG

The study observed six main challenges constituting a hindrance to the smooth application of quality principles in English language teaching and learning at IUCG. This was inferred from responses obtained from the survey and interviews as well as from personal observation. The first challenge had to do with the absence of a QA framework to give policy direction to the IUCG in its quest to provide quality private higher education in an environment that has of late become so competitive. This study also observed that the university was yet to establish a QA Unit. The absence of this important unit as well as the lack of the policy document constituted a major challenge in implementing quality at IUCG. It must, however, be acknowledged that, in spite of the nonexistence of these two essential internal QA mechanisms, the university has other means of assuring academic quality such as the five-minute brainstorming sessions with management; student/teacher appraisals, and external audits by the NAB and mentoring institutions like the University of Ghana.

Though the conduciveness of the physical environment of the campus was not in doubt, as participants affirmed, there was still the need for the university to provide some more and up-to-date teaching and learning materials to enhance the quality of learning experience at IUCG.

Participants also complained about the need to reduce class sizes for effective teaching and learning of the course in the institution. This meant that existing class sizes for the course were quite large and did not encourage effective teacher-learner interaction and monitoring.

With a considerable number of IUCG students coming from the Greater Accra and neighbouring regions, there was the likelihood of their L1s (Ga or Akan) influencing the quality of their spoken English (L2), with pronunciation being the worst affected.

As a private university, another major challenge that the IUCG had to face was the tough competition with public-funded universities and polytechnics. Government assistance to PHEIs in Ghana is rather minimal and mostly takes the form of physical donations through the GETFund of means of transport for students. Payment of salaries and other overhead costs are totally borne by owners of the private universities. This makes fees paid by students and research grants received from collaborating institutions the major sources of funding. Competing with the public-funded universities for students could therefore be a really daunting task. The fact that IUCG is located in the same city as the mentoring institution, the University of Ghana, makes IUCG's case rather interesting: There is certainly no doubt that the mentoring institution would be running the same programmes as the mentored; and, given the fact that the former is publicly-funded, older, better resourced, and more prestigious, it enjoys greater comparative advantage over the latter. The irony of the matter is that, in spite of its "disadvantaged" position, IUCG like many PHEIs has to charge affordable fees and, at the same time, provide quality teaching and learning materials and attractive courses to be able to stay in business. As public university staff embarks on strikes to demand better conditions of service from Government; the owners of private universities are also compelled to improve upon theirs too, as failure to do so could lead to loss of vital staff and faculty.

Being required to meet rigorous quality demands from state-funded QA agencies on one hand, and mentoring institutions on the other, could be expensive and stressful to both staff and management of a PHEI like IUCG. To be under mentorship for at least four years before gaining a presidential charter to award its own degrees and diplomas also implied that a PHEI would, over the period, remain overshadowed by the mentoring institutions when it comes to institutional culture and taking QA initiatives.

In the area of staff requirement to assist with teaching, consultancy and project work supervision, PHEIs are known to depend heavily on part-time lecturers from public universities. The IUCG could turn its challenge of having to compete with giants in the industry into an opportunity by tapping from their well-qualified academic human resource base to work with on part-time basis to enhance quality in teaching and also to make savings on expenditure. However, as observed earlier, overreliance on part-timers to teach various courses could pose some quality problems, especially when it came to retraining and commitment to the host PHEI's internal QA culture. The likelihood of part-timers seeing themselves as "outsiders" cannot be ignored, as it could compromise their full support of the PHEI's internal quality principles.

4.4.11 QA Practices and Language Learning Approaches Considered Unique to UDS

This study was conducted with one of its object being to identify some of the QA practices and language teaching learning approaches considered unique to the case institutions and to recommend them for replication elsewhere. All three categories of participants were thus asked questions relating to these areas and their responses are discussed in turn below, beginning with students'.

On the common aspects of quality in English language teaching and learning for the IUCG that they would like to recommend to other institutions, IUCG student respondents considered two key mechanisms as crucial. These are summarised in Table G4.4-10 in Appendix G. Majority (54.5%) of the students identified tools that can enhance performance as the most crucial tool for realising quality in EAP teaching. They recommended the provision of quality "*up-to-date and standard English textbooks for learning.*" They also proposed that EAP lecturers hold a PhD in the subject. Next in importance to tools in eyes of 45.5% of the students was pedagogy. By that they meant that for the realization of a worthwhile EAP learning experience, the teacher must ensure "*full participation of all students*" during lessons. They also recommended a student-centred approach that would encourage "*practising among students in and outside the lesson period to help them get used to the language.*" Surprisingly, the participants in this case failed to mention the need to ensure the existence of a congenial physical learning environment, a positive teacher bearing in class, mode of delivery, or effective course presentation as needful for quality EAP teaching and learning.

To ensure that there was a congenial atmosphere for teaching and learning EAP at IUCG, the lecturer recommended the provision of more teaching and learning materials and the breaking of large classes into smaller ones. He also observed that there was the need for focus to be shifted from *“linguistic knowledge to communicative ability”*; and that there must be a paradigm shift from *“exam passing to general language acquisition.”* To achieve “high quality” EAP tuition, the teacher recommended *“the provision of outstanding teachers to handle the students well.”* The views expressed by the teacher were supported by the learners, especially on the need to appoint teachers who held a PhD in the subject area, and the provision of adequate teaching and learning materials. It suggests that, in the opinion of the IUCG students and their teacher, complementing qualification and professionalism with the availability of quality teaching and learning materials was critical for the achievement of “high quality” teaching and learning of EAP.

From the manager’s standpoint, to achieve “high quality” teaching and learning of EAP, there is need for the engagement of *“total quality professionals to be engaged for efficient and effective oversight.”* His view suggests that quality teaching and learning can be realised through effective monitoring and supervision under the watchful eye of the QA professional. Class evaluation by students during lectures and examinations was also identified as the QA mechanism having a direct impact on EAP teaching and learning. Overall, the manager asserted the indispensability of quality assurance in promoting a rewarding learning experience because through it, *“learners have confidence in what they are learning and very sure of the quality of lecturers.”*

Interestingly, the students and their teacher agreed on most of the common aspects of quality in English language teaching and learning in IUCG. These include effective pedagogy; provision of quality teaching and learning materials; breaking of large classes into smaller ones; appointment of professionals, and the provision of quality teaching and learning materials. The appointment of professional was an aspect that all the three categories of subjects involved in this study cited; except that the manager went further to cite student-teacher appraisal as another means. Surprisingly, none of the participants mentioned the need for a congenial physical learning environment, a positive teacher bearing in class, and mode of delivery as enhancement tools.

4.4.12 Conclusion

The object of this case study has been to explore the application of quality assurance principles to English language teaching and learning in a private higher educational setting in Ghana. The study drew three main conclusions: First, that there was a general agreement among the students and their teacher regarding the importance of teaching of English language at tertiary level in Ghana. The learners identified the enhancement of basic communication and linguistic skills, remediation, and the socio-economic functions of the EAP course as the main basis for advocating for the putting in place of efficient and effective quality assurance strategies to enhance the teaching and learning of the course at IUCG. The course teacher who was interviewed in the study supported his claim for the relevance of English teaching at tertiary level with the observation that it promotes the communicative competence of learners and helps improve upon their writing skills. Second, the study noted that both internal and external quality assurance mechanisms were in place at IUCG; however, a QA Unit to coordinate all quality assurance-related activities and produce reports for administrative action at the university was yet to be established. A QA framework that would provide policy direction for quality implementation in the university was also non-existent. However, that did not mean the total absence of quality implementation tools at IUCG. For purposes of internal quality implementation, the academic board and other relevant statutory committees helped ensure quality in teaching and learning. Handbooks and curricula for various courses also contained objectives that served as standards providing benchmarks for the assessment of quality in the institution. With regard to external QA mechanisms, public-funded regulatory bodies like the NAB, and mentoring universities set out norms to be followed. In addition, periodic audits and inspections by these entities helped assure quality in IUCG. This study also observed that though the general physical and social learning environment appeared satisfactory; the learners and their teacher still felt that some more teaching and learning materials should be made available for their use. The socio-ethnic background of learners was also identified as a potential threat to the quality of their English language skills, especially in the areas of grammar, pronunciation, and speaking.

The importance of this research to IUCG as an institution and EAP teachers in particular is that, by raising the quality concerns of learners and teachers, academic and administrative issues at the university can be redesigned to fit their intended purposes and enhance the prospects of

achieving excellence there. The contribution of this study to the quality debate has been that, so long as PHEIs are mentored, their institutional quality culture and other QA initiatives would be curtailed by those of the mentoring institutions. The study is also a groundbreaking one as far as research into the application of QA principles to language teaching in a PHEI in Ghana is concerned.

Chapter 5 Discussion and Recommendations

The object of this study has been to explore and compare the application of quality assurance principles to the teaching and learning of EAP in four higher education institutions in Ghana with the aim of identifying: (a) how context-specific QA systems work in the case study institutions; (b) what is being done differently there and (c) to offer suggestions for quality enhancement and replication elsewhere. The objectives emanating from those goals are to:

- examine how quality assurance and control procedures are being applied for quality EAP teaching and learning at tertiary level in Ghana for student satisfaction;
- measure the extent to which student expectations about the quality of EAP teaching and learning has been met by each case study institution;
- compare QA standards used in EAP teaching and learning in Ghana with the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR);
- compare QA phenomena in public and private higher educational environments;
- weigh the views of learners, teachers and administrators of case study institutions on what they believe constitutes “high quality” language teaching and learning in higher education; their ideas about the “ideal teacher,” and
- offer suggestions for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning EAP in a multilingual context like Ghana’s.

Two main research questions, identified in Chapter 1 deemed relevant for addressing the objectives of this study are:

1. How are quality assurance principles being applied for quality EAP teaching and learning at tertiary level in Ghana?

In examining that question, this thesis seeks to identify and shed light on the following specific questions on QA practices in public and private HEIs for quality EAP:

- a) What are the procedures for disseminating the QA models and processes in the case study institutions such that those involved are aware of them and contribute to their definition and development?
- b) What feedback mechanisms are in place for observing teaching and learning activities and how are the results of the quality control fed back into their planning and delivery process?
- c) What subject standards and criteria serve as benchmarks for EAP in the case study institutions?
- d) How does the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages fit into their various local contexts?
- e) What are the main differences or similarities between the private and public HEIs in terms of the QA phenomena in their respective environments?

The second question considered in this thesis touched on unique QA practices in the case study institutions:

- 2. What things are the case study institutions doing differently that can be replicated elsewhere?

In Chapter 2, themes concerning these questions were reviewed from the relevant literature, based upon which the research methods and tools discussed in Chapter 3 were adopted. This chapter presents a cross-case comparison and analysis of findings across the four case HEIs with a view to discussing the findings within the context of the literature so as to arrive at answers to the research questions, and make recommendations and suggestions for future research.

It is common knowledge that in interpreting the data and findings in a research of this nature, the likelihood of misconstruing cannot be ruled out; hence the need to clarify the status of data and findings of this research. The findings from this research were derived largely from the student survey and, to a lesser extent, from interviews with senior staff and subject lecturers at the case study institutions (4.1). Though some findings presented in this thesis emanated from observations at the universities studied, these are not substantial and should not be considered as the official university view either. The absence of external perspectives from other stakeholders like parents and graduate employers, and the dearth of analysis of data on admissions,

assignments/examinations, and employment are accordingly acknowledged as limitations that future research could deal with. To address the possibility of interviewees reporting the ‘party line’ and not the reality, triangulation was used across individual survey participants and interviewees (3.3.2.3) in this study. Handbooks and documents like QA policy framework and strategic plans of the four case HEIs also helped in the triangulation of the quantitative data generated with the relevant policy document. It was deducible from the discrepancies in some interviewee responses that not all of them reported the ‘official view.’ Nonetheless, others affirmed the overt policy. Thus, in the discussion that follows, the term ‘institution’ should be construed as the perceptions expressed by the interviewees and not necessarily to the official view of individual case HEIs.

5.1 Discussing and Finding Answers to the Research Questions

This section discusses the answers to the various research questions individually to be followed by the presentation of general recommendations and suggestions for further research under 5.2. In the interim, an attempt is made here to establish the relationships between contexts, quality and quality assurance in the study. This is deemed important not only for the ease of comparison of the cases, but also to help sustain the recommendations that would eventually be made in this study. The contextual material presented earlier in Chapter 1 and summarized here in Table 5-1 seeks to provide that needed framework. This is followed by a summary in Table 5-2 outlining the factors that influence the cultures of the case institutions.

Table 5-1 Institutional Contextual Information

Wa Poly	UDS	CUCG	IUCG
Small sized	Large sized	Small sized	Small sized
Student population: 1,418 (registered in 2011/2013 academic year)	Student population: 12,349 (registered in the 2011/2012 academic year)	Student population: 4,180 (registered in 2011/2012 academic year)	Student population:800 (registered in 2011/2012 academic year)
Local population: 107,214	Local population: 107,214	Local population: 123,224	Local population:1,848,614
Distance from Accra:(712km)	Distance from Accra: (712km)	Distance from Accra: (373km)	Distance from city centre: (11km)
Striving for maturity	Striving for maturity	Striving for maturity	Striving for maturity
i) New campus ii) some basic teaching and learning materials & equipment still lacking iii) students’ hostel project at a standstill	i)New campus; one of four multi-campus university ii) inadequate hostel facilities, classroom, and office space iii) construction ongoing	i)New campus ii) inadequate physical infrastructure for staff & student accommodation and library facilities iii) construction ongoing	i)New campus ii) well laid-out and proportionate to relatively small student numbers. iii) less stress on available basic facilities

It is evident from the table that only one of the case institutions can be considered as large in terms of student population. They are operating from new campuses at their permanent sites, which can hardly be described as having the full complements of facilities for effective teaching and learning. Besides IUCG, construction works are underway at the campuses of the other three case institutions and seem to be progressing at a slower pace at the two public ones – UDS and Wa Poly. Some basic equipment, infrastructure, and teaching and learning materials are still lacking in all the case study institutions. The institutions with smaller numbers as well as the one with comparatively greater student numbers have challenges engendered by circumstances inherently linked to their individual contexts. Their peculiar challenges obviously threaten the realization of their respective internal QA objectives, as the quality culture of a given HEI does have a close connection with its environment (Harvey and Stensaker, 2008). This observation was confirmed by the responses from the survey participants and interviewees. Although participants from all the case study institutions complained about some inadequacies in existing teaching and learning facilities that militate against the realisation of enhanced quality EAP learning, those from UDS expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with the conduciveness of their general learning environment due to the lack of certain basic facilities. They cited distant lecture venues; congestion and discomfort in classrooms; large class sizes for EAP lessons; inadequate furniture; poor visibility and audibility in class as some of the factors impacting negatively on the quality of their learning experience. Though UDS, (Wa campus) appears to be better endowed in terms of student numbers and thus has a greater potential for higher revenue generation, the reality on the ground does not seem to reflect this status considering the complaints of survey participants about inadequate teaching and learning materials. Writing on the quality dilemmas of UDS, Abukari and Corner (2010) argued that “what seems to be clear is that the financial constraint on the UDS has dichotomized the quality of its knowledge for service slogan into what may be termed ‘rhetoric’ and ‘non-rhetoric’ dimensions” (4.2.2). Be that as it may, it must be acknowledged that quality assurance is a necessary but expensive enterprise. It is common knowledge that even in times of regular flow of funds from the state, internally generated funds (IGF) have often come in handy to supplement the support received from government and other funding sources for the provision of basic materials and equipment to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. If bigger universities are struggling, one can only imagine what could be happening in the smaller less endowed ones. Low student numbers, as depicted in the summary

above, therefore implies low IGFs for the other three smaller case study institutions, namely Wa Polytechnic, CUCG, and IUCG. Factors accounting for the low numbers in the three institutions include: prestige, competition, attractiveness of available course offerings, and the recent insistence by NAB on the possession of a minimum of grade C6 in requisite core and elective subject areas by applicants to tertiary institutions in Ghana (discussed in 1.6). Overall, the factors discussed do have a bearing on the cultures of the case institutions. Table 5-2, presents a summary of specific factors that influence their individual cultures.

Table 5-2 Factors Influencing Cultures of Case Institutions

WA POLY	UDS	CUCG	IUCG
<i>Distinctive Contextual Features</i>	<i>Distinctive Contextual Features</i>	<i>Distinctive Contextual Features</i>	<i>Distinctive Contextual Features</i>
i) fairly young, established in 1999 as the last of 10 regional polytechnics in Ghana ii) public-funded non-university tertiary educational institution iii) yet to award own degrees and diplomas	i) fairly young, established in 1992 ii) a campus of a multi-campus public-funded university iii) awards own degrees and diplomas	i) young, established in 2002 ii) private faith-based university college iii) affiliated to an accredited state-funded university iv) yet to award own degrees and diplomas	i) young, established in 2001 ii) private faith-based university college iii) affiliated to an accredited state-funded university iv) yet to award own degrees and diplomas
<i>Expression of Institutional Quality Culture</i>	<i>Expression of Institutional Quality Culture</i>	<i>Expression of Institutional Quality Culture</i>	<i>Expression of Institutional Quality Culture</i>
i) culture enshrined in motto: “Knowledge, application and service” ii) influenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acquisition of relevant knowledge • its application to industry • service to the community 	i) culture enshrined in motto: “Knowledge for service” ii) influenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • external expectations • expertise of staff • quality assessments/exam results iii) unique culture founded upon educational philosophy and pedagogical style not akin to norms of conventional university iv) training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blends academic knowledge with community development skills • sets standards by which quality can be determined. 		

	iv) 2 terms spent on campus, a 3 rd in the field for civic engagement termed Third Trimester Field Practical Programme (TTFPP)		
<i>Factors Influencing Institutional Quality Culture</i>	<i>Factors Influencing Institutional Quality Culture</i>	<i>Factors Influencing Institutional Quality Culture</i>	<i>Factors Influencing Institutional Quality Culture</i>
		culture influenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examination results • expertise of staff • good academic leadership of the Vice Chancellor • need to meet the expectations of NAB and monitoring institutions 	culture influenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cosmopolitan leadership • examination results • external expectations
<i>Institutional Quality Standards</i>	<i>Institutional Quality Standards</i>	<i>Institutional Quality Standards</i>	<i>Institutional Quality Standards</i>
sees quality as critical in building and maintaining reputation to win support of the public	standards include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) ability of students to apply knowledge acquired in “community entry, community dialogue, extension; ii) acquisition of practical tools of inquiry” by end of training 		

It is observable from the summaries that all the case HEIs are fairly young and were established in the 1990s and early 2000, the period when the English language was gaining an unprecedented prominence as a global lingua franca, and research into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) was also gathering momentum in academia (Afful, 2007; Hyland and Hamp-Lyons, 2002; Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Swales, 1997; Robinson, 1991). Second, their establishment falls within the era when the introduction of formal quality assurance systems into the higher education landscape, globally and in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, took centre stage (discussed in 1.1). It was also the period of increased private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education (Materu, 2007), one of the main reasons cited for governments seeing the need to pay closer attention to educational quality in the sub-region through the establishment of QA agencies (1.2).

It is interesting to note that in the context of this study, the status of the case institutions as young HEIs has very significant implications for internal quality implementation as it can delay the pace of the development of their respective institutional and quality cultures. The interconnection between quality culture and quality assurance processes has also been acknowledged by Harvey and Stensaker (2008). This author agrees with Loukkola and Zhang (2010) in their assertion that the cultural dimension of ‘quality culture’ comprises “shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitment.” In their description of culture as a concept that encompasses all those values that distinguish the educational institution from others, Ng’ang’a et al. (2012) also affirm that the existing culture in an institution is a major determinant of its performance. Therefore, developing and sustaining a strong culture that ensures high performance is always crucial. Under Section 1.3 of this thesis earlier research was cited for having established that besides the broader scope of national context, factors like institutional size, developmental stage, strategic thrusts, blend of organisational politics, and even its peculiar strengths and weaknesses should be taken into account when assessing the QA systems of an institution. These factors, according to Newton (2002: 187), are critical because “they represent a complex combination of constraint and opportunity”. From the summary of background information provided in Tables 5-1 and 5-2, the observations cited above on the interrelatedness of quality culture and QA present a true reflection of the contexts within which the case study institutions operate.

On what influence their various institutional and quality cultures, CUCG and IUCG – the two private case HEIs in this study, identified strikingly identical factors as they both cited learning outcomes, external expectations and leadership. Unsurprisingly, this study also observed some disparities in their quality cultures: Though both CUCG and IUCG cited “leadership”, the latter qualified their notion of the concept as “cosmopolitan”. Whereas CUCG considered staff expertise as important in their culture, IUCG did not. Interestingly, the two case public HEIs – Wa Poly and UDS rather than mention factors influencing their quality cultures, identified their mottos as sources of inspiration for their respective cultures. The two public HEIs cited the empowerment of students through the learning process and community service. The main distinctive feature between the two was the UDS’ unique educational philosophy which is not akin to the norms of the conventional university – blending academic knowledge with community development skills through its flagship Third Trimester Field Practical Programme (TTFPP). The slight disparities observed in the quality cultures relate to their order of

importance based on institutional contexts. This phenomenon of variations in quality cultures of academic institutions due to differences in their contextual features has been described as “a very logical and welcome feature” by Loukkola and Zhang (2010: 10). All the three institutions cited “external expectations” and “quality of assessments/exam results”, but whereas CUCG gave first place to “quality of assessment and examination results”, IUCG and UDS placed it second and third respectively. “External expectation” was placed third by CUCG and IUCG, but was identified by UDS as the foremost. “Expertise of staff” was identified by both UDS and CUCG as the second most important factor affecting their cultures. Interestingly, only the two PHEIs cited “leadership”, with IUCG identifying it as the foremost in impacting its culture. Their assertion affirms the observation made by Brundrett and Rhodes (2011) in the literature that the display of leadership and commitment by top and middle-level managers of HEIs is crucial for quality enhancement in higher education (2.2.2). As new universities that are still charting their paths, there is need for visionary leadership for the realisation of quality objectives. The Wa Poly respondents on the other hand stated the factors in a slightly different manner: “acquisition of relevant knowledge, its application to industry, and service to the community.” Being an institution that is mandated to provide technical and vocational education at a higher level, this assertion was not surprising. As factors influencing the institution’s culture, the process of ensuring that students acquire the relevant knowledge requires good “leadership” and “staff expertise”. Ability of students or graduates to apply the knowledge acquired in industry and community service would also pass for “quality assessment and examination results” (performance) on one hand, and “external expectation” on the other.

On standards by which the achievement of quality objectives can be determined, only two of the case institutions (Wa Poly and UDS) responded. The respondent from Wa Poly simply identified “quality” as critical in building and maintaining reputation to win support of the public. As a young institution that is yet to award its own degrees and diplomas and yet having to compete with older and well-established HEIs, identifying “quality” as a watchword is a step in the right direction. The response from UDS tends to be more elaborate. The following are cited as standards guiding the university’s QA principles:

- ability of students to apply knowledge acquired in “community entry”
- community dialogue

- extension
- practical tools of inquiry” by the end of their training

Considering the unique academic and pedagogical philosophy of UDS (described in 4.2.2), Abukari and Corner (2010) argue that measuring quality in the UDS context will be dependent on the extent to which teaching and learning there contribute to the achievement of its broad institutional goals spelt out in its mandate.

Generally, this overview of the cultures in the four institutions indicates that all of them are young and therefore have nascent quality cultures with external expectations playing a major role in all. Their respective institutional missions or profiles shine through in the differences that were observed next to the large degree of similarity.

5.1.1 How are quality assurance principles being applied for quality EAP teaching and learning at tertiary- level in Ghana?

The primary research question for this study sought from respondents the QA strategies adopted in their respective academic environments for quality EAP. Despite the individual contextual diversities of the case study HEIs, this study observed some interesting similarities in the responses on the application of quality assurance to teaching and learning in general and English language education in particular. The most common QA tools identified in the responses are displayed, in order of importance, in Table 5-3.

Table 5-3 Most Common Aspects of QA Tools as Comparators

Wa Poly	UDS	CUCG	IUCG
Observation of teacher’s bearing/Pedagogy = 69%	Observation of teacher’s bearing/Pedagogy = 51%	Observation of teacher’s bearing/Pedagogy = 38%	Observation of teacher’s bearing/Pedagogy = 82%
Periodic assessment/appraisal	Periodic assessment/appraisal	Periodic assessment/appraisal	Periodic assessment/appraisal
Qualification/Experience			

Of the four case study institutions, IUCG is the most outstanding in employing observation as a tool for assuring quality in the teaching and learning of EAP with CUCG being least. In compensation for this, CUCG is far ahead of the others in its reliance on periodic student-teacher assessment and appraisal for the same purpose. Deans, heads of department, and students were cited as key actors in the observation process. Only two of the case institutions, Wa Poly and

CUCG, show in their responses an attempt at the use of a third mechanism – taking EAP teachers’ qualification and experience into account. It was observed that Wa Poly respondents consider qualification as a tool in itself, rather than one of the areas assessed. This response might have arisen out of poor understanding of the question. Their CUCG colleagues identified teachers’ experience and qualification as qualities that a typical appraisal in their context should look out for. A summary of specific QA tools and areas of assessment is presented in Table 5-4. The different tools and areas of assessment are marked “X” to show which higher educational institution they apply in.

Table 5-4 Specific QA Tools and Areas of Assessment

Institution	Wa Poly	UDS	CUCG	IUCG
QA Tool	<i>Area of Assessment</i>	<i>Area of Assessment</i>	<i>Area of Assessment</i>	<i>Area of Assessment</i>
Internal: a) Observation of teacher’s				
bearing in class; self-discipline and morality	X	X	X	
Pedagogical delivery skills	X	X	X	X
relevance and practicality of lectures			X	X
qualification/experience	X	X		
full-time appointment		X		
punctuality & regularity in class attendance	X		X	X
self-expression	X			X
cordiality/interactivity	X			
ability to teach to students’ understanding	X		X	X
physical appearance	X			
student/graduate performance	X		X	X
Internal: b) Appraisal using questionnaires/surveys/oral interviews				
teacher’s bearing in class	X			
pedagogy	X	X		X
self-expression			X	X
punctuality & regularity in class;		X		
relevance of reference material		X		X
quality of lecture notes				X
availability/quality of teaching and learning			X	

materials (TLMS)				
teacher's qualification and/or experience			X	
student understanding and performance		X		
ability to meet course deadlines		X		X
practicality of and relatedness of lecture to fieldwork		X		
quality of students' assessment and outcomes		X		X
Conduciveness of learning environment		X		
External: <i>Periodic Inspections/audits; moderation of assessments; mentoring</i>				
qualification of teachers	X	X	X	X
quality of student entry grades	X	X	X	X
graduate performance	X	X	X	X
evaluation of TLMS and equipment	X	X	X	X
quality of assessment	X	X	X	X
conduciveness of physical learning environment	X	X	X	X

It is evident from the results that the case institutions employ similar tools in their individual internal quality assessment activities. Specific areas assessed are strikingly similar as well, and can be categorized under five broad thematic areas:

- Course presentation;
- Lecturer's bearing in class;
- Mode of delivery;
- Pedagogy; and
- Learning environment

In all the cases, the appraisal (usually employing questionnaires, surveys, or oral interviews) assesses the quality of pedagogy, assessment and research; teaching and learning materials and equipment; and the physical learning environment. "Observation" by deans, heads of department, and students take into account the quality of EAP teachers' pedagogical and/or presentation

skills; their punctuality to and regularity in class as well as the performance of their students or graduates.

An interesting finding made in this study is that, though a significant percentage of the academic workforce of the PHEIs is part-time (with as high as 87% of lecturers in one case), respondents from the two private case institutions failed to identify the full-time status of lecturers as needful. It was rather the respondents from UDS, a public university that identified it. Ironical though this may seem; it is important to note that this could be what they see as one of their own strengths or 'unique selling points.' The need raised by the UDS respondents for an assessment to consider the ability of the lecturers to link their material to practical and fieldwork is also in keeping with the unique curriculum of that university (4.2.2). This further emphasizes the need for the EAP curriculum of UDS to take into account that university's unique philosophy so as to equip students with the needed skills for effective community work. Regarding external QA, the tools and areas of assessment were virtually the same in all the case study institutions, except for affiliation with older public universities which is a requirement for PHEIs. This similarity was not surprising since that is how they are regulated. It is also obvious that official rules are followed in the practice and recognised by respondents. Periodic inspections or external audits of programmes and quality of equipment and facilities by state-funded external regulatory bodies; moderation of assessments by external peer reviewers; and mentoring constitute the major areas of external influence in all the institutions. Overall, the five thematic areas identified in this study should best be seen as complementary rather than alternatives and have the potential of interrelated tensions reflecting the values and 'power' of the various players.

The Grundtvig Partnership (2009-2011), in a twenty-seven-country survey, identified the use of QA tools like observation, assessment, and ensuring that teachers possess the appropriate qualifications as examples of best practices in language teaching for adults in Europe. That the results of this research corroborate their findings points to the global nature of these tools and their effectiveness for assuring quality in language learning. The slight discrepancies observed in the application of the tools in the various academic environments also confirm the observation that quality management is context-dependent (2.2.1). In agreement with the partners, it is noteworthy that quality assurance tools in themselves do not guarantee better language teaching and learning unless they are used well. Creating a congenial learning environment and blending

it with the use of quality tools is a sure way of attaining a rewarding teaching and learning experience. Choosing from different kinds of available tools and ensuring that your choice suits your objective, and consciously involving major stakeholders like the learners, the teachers, and the institution are also steps in the right direction (Ibid). Brennan and Singh (2010) have also asserted the possibility of QA becoming a tool of both attack and defence for different players in the HE sector (2.2.1). They argue that depending on quality and regulatory regime QA could be an avenue for showing others where power lies. That all the case institutions are required to strictly comply with quality regimes imposed by the National Accreditation Board (NAB) and National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) regarding the quality of students' entry profiles, personnel (especially academic staff), and facilities is an affirmation of their observation. The PHEIs are, in addition to the above, required to observe other standards set by their mentoring institutions (2.2.3). Non-compliance with the quality regimes could imply the denial of institutional and new programme accreditation or the forfeiture of re-accreditation for existing programmes. The responses of the case study institutions, as far as external assessment is concerned, are therefore more of "compliance" than anything else. Internally, they could be considered as quality control strategies put in place to serve as a filtering mechanism to help confirm the compliance of the institutions with "minimal agreed-upon quality requirements" (2.2.2). Despite the varying degrees of dependence on the identified QA tools, all the four institutions in this case study aim at ensuring that the quality of the EAP course fits the purpose for which it was designed and ultimately lead to the transformation of students into empowered citizens in Ghanaian society and economy.

5.1.2 What are the procedures for disseminating the QA models and processes such that those involved are aware of them and contribute to their definition and development?

In response to research question (a), all the case HEIs indicated that they have in place systems for disseminating quality models and processes. The summary presented in Table 5-5 illustrates how each of them goes about the dissemination exercise to enhance internal stakeholder awareness and participation.

Table 5-5 Comparative Summary of Procedures for Disseminating QA Models and Processes in Case Study Institutions

Wa Poly	UDS	CUCG	IUCG
QA Policy developed. Planning Unit to ensure wide dissemination of performance standards centrally and provide units with professional support in their perpetual process of self-evaluation and improvement (Wa Polytechnic 2011: 2).	A system for self-evaluation involving the QA Unit as well as mentorship exists. Individual and institutional level involvement ensured by the QA Unit.	QA Unit coordinates QA model dissemination and processes.	QA Unit yet to be established. Meanwhile, 5-minute brainstorming sessions with management are a regular feature in QA model dissemination at IUCG.
Questionnaires used for staff appraisal followed by invitation of comments from staff appraised before submission of report to the Rector.	Very senior members of UDS mentor young and inexperienced lecturers. Promotions are tied to publication, thus creating lecturers' awareness of the "publish-or-perish" mantra. Students assess teachers at the end of the trimester. Surveys using questionnaires conducted at the end of the trimester.	Questionnaires, surveys, and oral interviews used to assess the quality of pedagogy, assessment and research activities of teachers. Quality of teaching and learning materials and equipment as well as the general conduciveness of the physical learning environment also assessed. Meetings and seminars also provide forums for dissemination of QA models.	Student/teacher appraisals and external audits by the NAB and mentoring institutions like the University of Ghana form part of the process.
Prior notification of subjects of impending external QA audits/inspections by regulatory bodies. Same for internal QA assessments.	Prior notification of subjects of impending external QA audits/inspections by regulatory bodies. Same for internal QA assessments.	Prior notification of subjects of impending external QA audits/inspections by regulatory bodies and/or mentoring institutions. Same for internal QA assessments.	Prior notification of subjects of impending external QA audits/inspections by regulatory bodies and/or mentoring institutions.. Same for internal QA assessments.
Publication of both internal and external assessment/moderation (examination, appraisal, inspection) results.	Publication of both internal and external assessment/moderation (examination, appraisal, inspection) results.	Publication of both internal and external assessment/moderation (examination, appraisal, inspection) results.	Publication of both internal and external assessment/moderation (examination, appraisal, inspection) results.

The case study institutions have a lot in common regarding their QA model dissemination processes. Major differences are observable particularly in the area of process coordination and implementation mechanisms. For instance, while the UDS and CUCG have QA Units placed directly under the Office of the Vice Chancellor and charged with the responsibility of coordination QA-related activities, Wa Poly and IUCG are yet to establish them. Wa Poly appears to be much ahead of the IUCG in streamlining the dissemination process as the

polytechnic already has a QA Policy document and, as an interim measure, has charged the Planning Unit with the responsibility of dissemination of performance standards. IUCG, on the other hand, has neither of these systems in place and rather relies on regular “brainstorming sessions” with management. Although brainstorming has been identified as one of the basic problem-solving tools adopted by organisations to come out with ideas and possible solutions and has been described as an all-round mechanism for generating ideas for quality assurance, it has been criticized for being deficient in providing objective assessment (Mishra, 2006). Overall, the procedures employed by the case study institutions for disseminating QA models in their various contexts reflect compliance to external authority, consumerism, academic values (both general and subject specific).

5.1.3 What feedback mechanisms are in place for observing teaching and learning activities and how are the results of the quality control fed back into their planning and delivery process?

Research question (b) sought to establish from respondents the kind of mechanisms put in place in their respective institutions for feedback. There is evidence at each case study institution of the existence of various feedback mechanisms for the observation of teaching and learning. Table 5-6 presents a summary of the mechanisms to be followed by a comparative discussion of each and how the results of the quality control are fed back into the planning and delivery processes at the case institutions.

Table 5-6 Feedback Mechanisms for Observing Teaching and Learning Activities at Case Study Institutions

Wa Poly	UDS	CUCG	IUCG
<i>Internal</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>Internal</i>	<i>Internal</i>
i) discussion of marked scripts (4.1.6) ii) observation iii) verbal testimonies from students iv) surveys v) learning outcomes	i) discussion of marked scripts ii) observation iii) periodic student-teacher appraisal/survey iv) oral interviews	i) discussion of marked scripts ii) periodic assessment/appraisal iii) observation	i) discussion of marked scripts ii) observation iii) periodic assessment/evaluation
<i>External</i>	<i>External</i>	<i>External</i>	<i>External</i>
i) moderation of exam questions/marked scripts (peer review) by NABPTEX; ii) accreditation reports from NAB inspectors	i) moderation of exam questions/marked scripts (peer review); ii) accreditation reports from NAB inspectors	i)moderation of exam questions/marked scripts (peer review); ii) accreditation reports from NAB inspectors iii) visitation reports from mentoring institutions	i)moderation of exam questions/marked scripts (peer review); ii) accreditation reports from NAB inspectors iii) visitation reports from mentoring institutions

Survey participants from all the case institutions acknowledge the discussion of marked examination and assignment scripts in class by teachers as very important in obtaining student feedback for the improvement of future assessment questions. This finding confirms current research results affirming that students generally welcome feedback. On the importance of marking as a feedback tool, Nott (2013: 4) points out that “[t]he principal purpose of marking is to provide students with feedback on their performance: marking thus stands at the sharp end, at the point of implementation, of formative assessment.” In the implementation of quality language teaching, the importance of marking and discussing the scripts afterwards with students cannot be overemphasized as it is believed to provide equal opportunity to both the teacher and the learner to improve upon their work.

The case study institutions also identified observation, periodic assessment/appraisal/survey, and oral interviews as the other internal mechanisms employed in their various contexts for feedback. Dependence on these mechanisms varied from institution to institution. Besides CUCG, the other three case institutions identified observation as the most prominent tool for obtaining feedback. At Wa Poly majority of student respondents rated observation as the most frequently used tool for assessing teaching quality in the institution, while at UDS over half of the respondents identified the observation of teachers’ bearing in class and their pedagogical skills as the most frequently used assessment tool. Similarly, majority of the students at IUCG identified observation as the most frequently used assessment tool. They implied by ‘observation’, looking out for excellence in the lecturer’s pedagogical/delivery skills. At CUCG, however, periodic assessment and appraisal using questionnaires or surveys to assess the teacher was identified as the most frequently used assessment tool for student feedback. Unlike CUCG and IUCG, both Wa Poly and UDS cited verbal testimonies from students as an additional mechanism for obtaining feedback, with Wa Poly being the only case institution to cite learning outcome as a feedback mechanism.

It is clear from the summary that external feedback in all the case institutions usually takes the form of peer reviewer’s comments and external examiner’s reports for authentic assessment. Like all polytechnics in Ghana, the moderation of draft examination questions and the auditing of marked scripts in the case of Wa Poly are overseen by the National Board for Professional and

Technician Examinations (NABPTEX). As regards the two private case institutions, CUCG and IUCG, in addition to their individual internal arrangements for peer review, the mentoring institutions also play a key role in providing feedback on the quality of assessment materials. The UDS also relies on external examiners for feedback for the improvement of the quality examinations conducted in the institution. On accreditation-related and external quality assurance issues at all the four case institutions, the National Accreditation Board (NAB) and the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) are the two main regulatory/supervisory bodies mandated to ensure compliance. In the private universities (CUCG and IUCG), mentoring institutions to which they are affiliated also play a key role in providing feedback on quality assurance.

On how the external feedback received is fed back into the planning and delivery processes in the case institutions, the responsibility of dissemination for compliance and amends rested primarily with management. Deans and Heads of Department also serve as conduits for further transmission of external feedback to lecturers and students. Internally, feedback obtained from students and peers is used for the review of course outlines, questions and marking schemes.

Vlasceanu et al, 2007 consider quality management as all activities that are undertaken by a higher education institution to guarantee the fulfillment and implementation of quality policy and objectives and responsibilities by means of quality planning, quality control, quality assurance, and quality improvement mechanisms (2.2.2). Overall, the summary in Table 5-6 depicts a largely similar picture in all the case study institutions to what the authors are describing. The case study institutions tend to apply the same set of procedures in assuring and improving quality through the use of internal and external feedback from students on one hand and regulatory bodies on the other.

5.1.4 What subject standards and criteria serve as benchmarks for EAP in the case institutions?

For easy reference in discussing the responses to research question (c) on standards serving as benchmarks for the EAP course in the case study institutions, a summary is presented in Table 5-7. This is followed by a comparative summary of differences in emphasis in pedagogy, curriculum and QA procedures shown in Table 5-8. Next is Table 5-9, which presents a summary of emphasis in process/outcome distinctions among case institutions.

Table 5-7 Summary of Standards Serving as Benchmarks for EAP in Case Study HEIs

Wa Poly	UDS	CUCG	IUCG
Course Objective: To develop in learners basic communication skills, especially reading and writing skills.	Course Objectives: 1. To assist students improve upon their skills and competencies in English as a working tool for other courses of study. 2. To improve the linguistic skills of students; ‘polish’ students’ English grammar and usage; and enhance their writing skills.	Course Objectives: 1. To enhance learners’ writing skills and the proper use of the English Language. 2. To improve the communication competence of beginning students in their self-expression at both inter-personal and group relationships. 3. To assist students obtain relevant helps for undergraduate level studies, goal setting and time management.	Course Objectives: 1. To help “bridge the pre-tertiary gap in English grammar and comprehension. 2. To assist students with English reading and writing skills relevant for university work. 3. To get students to develop the skills of extracting and sorting information from multiple sources and synthesizing them into coherent arguments in their essays and to acquire academic presentation skills. 4. To help students do close attentive reading and be able to distinguish main points from illustrative details.
Duration:2 semesters	Duration: 1 trimester	Duration:2 semesters	Duration: 7 semesters
Total no. of credits: 4	Total no. of credits: 2	Total no. of credits: 3	Total no. of credits: 11
Requirement: Compulsory to all first-year students	Requirement: Compulsory to all first-year students	Requirement: Compulsory to all first-year students	Requirement: Compulsory to all first-year and continuing students

It is observable from the summary that the compulsoriness of the EAP course cuts across. All the case study institutions also have similar objectives for the teaching of the course. They all cite the enhancement of students’ communication and linguistic skills with specific mention of reading and writing as the main objective, but tend to be silent on listening and speaking skills. IUCG is the only institution that somehow explicitly refers to ‘speaking’ in the objectives where it is stated as helping students to “acquire academic presentation skills.” From the literature EAP is defined as “teaching English with the aim of facilitating learners’ study or research in that language” (Hyland and Hamp-Lyons, 2002:2). EAP programmes are thus designed to equip students (being trained with English as the main medium of instruction) with the requisite language and related skills (2.1). This description perfectly reflects the phenomenon in Ghana

and also falls into the second of the four scenarios identified by Duddley-Evans and St. James (1998) for EAP teaching worldwide: ESL situations, where English is mainly used at all levels of education but with national language dominating in everyday situation (e.g. Anglophone countries in Africa, South East Asian countries). The conventional communication skills that are often targeted are: writing, reading, listening and speaking; while the related language skills include appropriate “linguistic tools” that enable them in their analysis of the main features of the English language (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2007). Robinson (1991) also observes that the teaching content (of EAP) is usually prepared in such a way that it matches the learner’s requirements. In Ghana, English is the official language and is used as the main medium of instruction from upper primary to university level. As rightly captured in the objectives of IUCG, the EAP course in Ghana, among other things, aims at “bridging the pre-tertiary gap” by helping undergraduate students improve upon their grammar, comprehension, writing and speaking skills.

By way of assessment standards for language education, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) serves as a global reference. In acknowledging the importance of each of the basic communicative skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), it provides descriptors (“can do statements”) for assessing the quality of student performance at each stage of their linguistic development (2.4.1). Listening and speaking are thus equally important skills that learners would need if they can participate effectively in lectures and group discussions. Active listening is very necessary for student feedback. Good speaking skills also help boost the confidence of students. Besides reading and writing, the ability of students to listen and speak well certainly goes beyond classroom task requirements to include enhancing their competences to cope with the demands of the world of work. It is therefore important that more conscious efforts are made at highlighting these other two skills in the EAP curriculum of case institutions.

As regards course duration and number of credit hours, UDS has the shortest of just a trimester and two credits in the first year; with IUCG having the longest of seven semesters and 11 credits. It was not surprising that respondents from the former institution were among those who advocated for an extension of the EAP course to cover four years. In Wa Poly and CUCG, the course is taken for two semesters each with four and three credits respectively. Teachers and students from these two institutions also advocated for more contact hours for the course.

In Table 5-8, a summary of pedagogical, curricular, and QA procedures is presented to portray the distinctions in emphasis by the case study institutions in these areas as far as EAP teaching and learning are concerned.

Table 5-8 Comparative Summary of Differences in Emphasis in Pedagogy, Curriculum and QA Procedures in Case Study Institutions

Wa Poly	UDS	CUCG	IUCG
<i>Pedagogy</i>	<i>Pedagogy</i>	<i>Pedagogy</i>	<i>Pedagogy</i>
i) Progress of learners assessed through oral quizzes, group and individual assignments, tests, term papers and examinations; ii) monitoring and supervision of teachers done by management, deans and heads of department	i) Adopting a student-centred approach to EAP teaching; ii) assessing students' progress in writing skills, grammar, vocabulary, and other language mechanics through take-home assignments, class exercises, and end of semester examinations; iii) discussing marked scripts with students;	i) Periodic assessment done to monitor student progress in the course; ii) adoption of lesson plans outlining the introduction, delivery, questions, evaluation, and conclusion; iii) teaching to the understanding of learners, iv) ensuring relevance/practicality of lessons; v) improved student/graduate performance vi) discussing marked scripts with students	i) Student participation in class encouraged; ii) EAP learning made more practical than theory-based; iii) learner progress monitored through quality assessment; iv) marked scripts discussed with students.
<i>Specific Areas Highlighted in the Curriculum:</i>	<i>Specific Areas Highlighted in the Curriculum:</i>	<i>Specific Areas Highlighted in the Curriculum:</i>	<i>Specific Areas Highlighted in the Curriculum:</i>
Conventional usage; correct use of special cases of verb agreement; correct use of punctuation marks; distinguishing between sentences, clauses and phrases, and sentence structure; comprehension; summary; and understanding figures of speech; and note-taking skills	i) English Language, general linguistic skills; grammar; usage; writing skills ii) Study Skills Introduction to study skills; preparing for academic work and communication context; plans and time-tables/time management (i.e. revising, making plans and time-tables); note-taking/note-making and lectures; academic essay/report writing/summary writing; proposal writing; systematic study method management of memory and learning;	i) Study, reading, writing, research, and oral skills ii) basic grammar rules, proper syntax, word usage, vocabulary enhancement and basic composition, and comprehension.	Grammar; reading & comprehension; academic writing skills

	strategies of information/data search		
<i>QA Procedures:</i>	<i>QA Procedures:</i>	<i>QA Procedures:</i>	<i>QA Procedures:</i>
i) Extra time devoted to teaching of structure and usage in all three English-centred courses outside the official allotted time of two hours per week. ii) Draft exam scripts submitted to NABPTEx for review 8 weeks into each semester; peer reviewers' comments sent to course lecturers for corrections, if any, before administering the paper. iii) Marked assessment scripts sent for external review; external examiner's report made available to management and course lecturers for improvement iv) Marked scripts discussed in class with students for feedback for improvement.	i) Students taught how to enhance their listening skills, reading, academic report and proposal writing, and summarizing skills. ii) Students also taught to plan their studies and assessment well; draw time-tables, manage time, take and make notes; and how to communicate effectively. iii) Exams are moderated internally and externally. iv) Marked scripts discussed in class with students for feedback for improvement.	i) Three-minute talk on a personal experience, based on a written outline, delivered by each student; small group oral presentations on an assigned section of the Earth Charter made. ii) Students are taught how to choose and limit a topic; take notes, organise ideas, form a thesis, list sources, choose and use quotations properly, and document references. iii) Mentoring institutions monitor and moderate examination scripts. iv) Marked scripts discussed in class with students for feedback for improvement.	i) Course taught in small groups; class activities characterized by group work, oral presentations and extensive practical assignments; writing, grammar, and usage drills organised for learners on weekly basis to assess their progress. ii) marked scripts are discussed and student feedback use for improvement. iii) Mentoring institutions monitor and moderate examination scripts.

It is evident from the summary above that although there are some universal features characterizing the pedagogy, curriculum, and QA procedures of the case institutions, emphasis on these areas vary from one institution to another. It is also observable that the distinction between pedagogy and QA is a bit blurred and, in some cases, overlap; nonetheless, it reflects the reality on the ground at the case institutions. Overall, organising periodic assessments through quizzes, take-home assignments, and examinations serve as the main media for monitoring student progress in all the case institutions. Discussing marked scripts afterwards is also identified by all the institutions as a popular means of getting student feedback for the improvement of future assessments; except that some students wondered whether such feedback is used at all for the intended purpose. With regard to monitoring mechanisms for teachers, it is only Wa Poly that acknowledges its use, saying this is done by management, the deans and heads of department. While UDS and IUCG add the adoption of a student-centred approach as a means of encouraging learner participation during EAP lessons, CUCG identifies the adoption of lesson plans, teaching to the understanding of learners, and ensuring that lessons are relevant and

practical as some of their strategies for ensuring quality pedagogy. There has been a considerable volume of debate on which pedagogical paradigm yields the best results and leads to a more rewarding learner experience: a teacher-centred approach or a learner-centred classroom instruction? While some scholars argue that the two are not entirely different in the sense that they aim at a common outcome of ensuring that students do what they are supposed to do: learning; others contend that it is not just about outcomes; but rather process: how teaching/learning is done. A teaching style that is student-centred tends to engage students in the learning process whilst a teacher-centred paradigm mostly aims at transmitting information. This therefore suggests that a teacher-centred teaching may be limited in its engagement of learners during the learning process. The ‘communicative approach’ to language teaching (CLT) is defined as “a language teaching methodology that emphasizes interaction, student-centred learning, task-based activities, and communication for real-world, meaningful purposes” (Brown, 2007:378). In this study, the teachers, in most of the cases, agree with their students in advocating that EAP lessons become more practical and interactive.

On specific areas highlighted in their curricula, reading and writing cut across the case institutions. Grammar and usage also feature prominently in all the curricula. Both Wa Poly and UDS cite note-taking skills, but the latter goes further to cite academic essay/report writing/summary writing; proposal writing; strategies of information/data search, among others as areas covered by the Study Skills component of their curriculum. Interestingly, the procedures identified at UDS this time around include teaching students how to enhance their listening skills, an area that was hitherto not cited in the course objectives. The description of the EAP curriculum by the case institution shows that the skills taught in the course as well as the academic features of the English language are common to different disciplines and not necessarily focused on specific ones (Lis, 2010). Thus, the EAP course in the contexts of the institutions fits into Coffey’s (1984) model of “common core” rather than the “subject specific” type. Viewed from that standpoint, it may be argued that the description of the EAP courses taught in all the institutions involved in this study is more consistent with what Blue (1998) calls “English for General Academic Purposes” (EGAP) as opposed to “English for Specific Academic Purposes” (ESAP). EGAP emphasizes general skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing as relevant skills associated with learners’ day-to-day study activities; while ESAP deals with the teaching of the distinctive aspects of particular disciplines, and focuses on specific

activities that students are required to carry out (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998). Given that the communication and linguistic skills acquired in EGAP courses are transferrable to specific work, it must be acknowledged that the two are interconnected.

As a means of ensuring quality delivery of the EAP course, the case institutions identify various QA procedures in use in their local contexts. Like earlier observed, this area also manifests some features that are universal; nonetheless, there are specific practices that vary from institution to institution. Discussion of marked scripts with students in class again surfaced as a tool the case study institutions have in common. External peer review of examination questions is also a practice common to all the institutions. While the private case institutions have theirs reviewed by their mentoring institutions, those of Wa Polytechnic are sent to the NABPTEx for the same purpose eight weeks into each semester. Reviewers' comments serve as a means of improving upon the questions before they are administered to students.

With the exception of UDS, three of the case institutions: Wa Poly, CUCG, and IUCG went further to elaborate on the procedures adopted to enhance EAP teaching in their contexts. At Wa Poly, extra time is devoted to teaching of structure and usage in all three English-centred courses outside the official allotted time of two hours per week. The practice at CUCG is that a three-minute talk on personal experience, based on a written outline, is delivered by each student. In addition, small group oral presentations on an assigned section of the Earth Charter are done by learners. In the case of IUCG, the course is taught in small groups; with class activities being characterized by group work, oral presentations and extensive practical assignments. Writing, grammar, and usage drills are also organised for learners on weekly basis to assess their progress. Table 5-9 provides a summary of areas of emphasis in the process/outcome distinctions by the case institutions.

Table 5-9 Summary Showing Emphasis in Process/Outcome Distinctions by Case Study HEIs

Wa Poly	UDS	CUCG	IUCG
<i>Process</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Process</i>
Students taught to: i) make notes; ii) develop reading and writing skills; iii) understand conventional usage;	Students taught: i) subject-verb agreement; ii) the writing process – free writing, thinking, planning, gathering information, drafting the	Students taught: i) reading, writing, research, and oral skills; ii) basic grammar rules, syntax, word usage, vocabulary enhancement,	Students taught how to: i) read and critique a variety of academic essays in their areas of study ii) summarize extracts and essays; iii) simplify texts

iii) use the special cases of verb agreement; iv) use the punctuation sign correctly; v) know the difference between sentences, clauses and phrases, and the structure of a sentence; vi) comprehend a passage; vii) summarize a passage; and understand figures of speech; viii) know the conventions of usage and develop writing skills	essay; iii) essay writing – narrative, descriptive, expository and argumentative; iv) editing – spelling, punctuation, and paraphrasing; v) common errors in English usage	basic composition, and comprehension	of moderate complexity; and iv) write both explanatory and argumentative synthesis of selected texts
<i>Desired outcomes:</i>	<i>Desired outcomes:</i>	<i>Desired outcomes:</i>	<i>Desired outcomes:</i>
i) Students able to: make good notes, ii) develop reading and writing skills; iii) understand conventions of usage; iv) use special cases of verb agreement; and use the punctuation sign correctly; v) know the difference between sentences, clauses and phrases, and the structure of a sentence; vi) comprehend a passage; summarize a passage; and understand figures of speech; vii) make notes and develop reading skills.	i) Students develop good writing skills; ii) comprehend written English literature; and iii) develop oral English skills	i) Learners' writing skills and proper use of the English Language enhanced; ii) communication competence of beginners in self-expression at both inter-personal and group relationships enhanced; iii) relevant helps for undergraduate-level studies, goal setting and time management obtained.	i) Gap in pre-tertiary English grammar and comprehension bridged; ii) students acquire advanced writing skills; and able to: ii) identify the appropriate form of language (i.e. register) suitable for different audience types and purposes; iii) write with concision and coherence, using logical methods of development; and iv) construct sentences that are consistent with intention and stylistic choice.

For the purpose of analysing the summaries presented in the table, reference is made to Heyworth's second and third models – 'quality as a process' and 'quality based on results'. In examining how quality principles can be applied in language teaching, Heyworth (2011) proposes four "models" namely:

- quality as client satisfaction
- quality as a process
- quality based on results
- quality based on values

Placing ‘quality’ in the language teaching context, Heyworth explains that “delivering language courses can be seen as a set of processes: a connected chain from needs analysis, general setting of curriculum aims, defining syllabus, planning lessons, etc.” (Ibid.) The description of the QA processes and their application to EAP teaching and learning in the case institutions presented in Table 5-9 fits into Heyworth’s first model. The processes and procedures outlined earlier in Table 5-8 and revisited here, were arrived at based on the analysis of the needs of first-year undergraduates in Ghanaian HEIs. Responses from subject lecturers interviewed at all the case institutions affirmed that majority of their students had course-initial challenges with poor grammar, poor reading and writing skills, and inadequate vocabulary as some of the commonest weaknesses. These areas also constitute the prime issues that the curricula and syllabuses of the case institutions seek to address. Afful (2007) in an earlier study observed that EAP (locally termed Communication Skills), is taught in tertiary education institutions as a means of helping undergraduates to acquire the relevant academic literacy skills. It is considered as a transitional course aimed at re-orienting undergraduates linguistically to metamorphose from the use of high school lingo to tertiary.

The third model which is ‘quality based on results’ takes into account the efficiency of the process such that these two fundamental questions are addressed: “how much language is learned?” “Is there satisfactory added value in the learning process?” (Heyworth, 2011). From Table 5-9, the desired outcomes of the processes put in place at all the case institutions are based on the level of achievement of learners in the EAP course. The attainment of enhanced reading and writing skills by learners is identified by all the case institutions. Three of the case institutions (Wa Poly, UDS, and IUCG) identify improved comprehension and self-expression as areas of desirable outcomes. On actual learner achievement (discussed in 4.1.5), majority of Wa Poly and IUCG respondents rate their general communication and linguistic skills after taking the EAP course as “excellent”. Their course teachers acknowledge this improvement, but do not think it is “excellent” as the students claim, and rate the achievement of the general quality objective of the university as average. In a similar learner self-evaluation at UDS and IUCG majority of respondents rated their achievement in the four major areas of communicative competence as “good”. Their claims were confirmed by their teachers. While the UDS lecturers went further to rate the achievement of the general quality objective of the university as 50%; their colleague from IUCG declined to respond. Despite the disagreements between course

teachers and their students in some cases over learner achievement, the results show that the overall realization of their QA objectives as far as EAP teaching and learning are concerned is satisfactory.

5.1.5 How does the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages fit into their various local contexts?

The study found it quite surprising that such a strategic QA framework for language teaching as the CEFR was unknown to almost all the interviewees from the case institutions. In response to research question (d), only one lecturer from Wa Poly admitted to having heard of it, but conceded that he did not know much about the framework. Nonetheless, the case institutions have standards serving as subject benchmarks in their local contexts. These are in the form of course objectives outlined in their curricula and syllabuses for the Language and Communication (EAP) course. At Wa Poly, an interviewee identified the syllabus for Communication Skills and the recommended grading scale of A to D at the end of each semester as the main standard for measuring learner achievement. Though not specifically cited by respondents from the other case institutions, the practice is not any different. To determine how the CEFR fits into the contexts of the case institutions would require a juxtaposition of their course objectives and desired outcomes summarized in Tables 5-7 and 5-9 above.

The CEFR which evolved as a result of the several issues that emerge when trying to describe levels of language learning, teaching and assessment (details discussed in 2.5) hinges upon four thematic areas (“models” discussed in 5.1.6):

- i. quality based on client satisfaction
- ii. quality as a process
- iii. results-based quality assurance
- iv. quality and values

As Heyworth (2011:17) observes, “the different models are not mutually exclusive, and in most environments are all present in some way.” In defining client needs, the introduction of the CEFR poses the following questions as the basis to consider in need analysis: “Language learning activities are based on the needs, motivations, characteristics of learners:

- What will they need to do with the language?

- What will they need to learn in order to do what they want?
- What makes them want to learn?
- What sort of people are they?
- What knowledge, skill and experiences do their teachers possess?
- What access do they have to resources?
- How much time can they afford to spend?

(Council of Europe, 2001: 4)

As discussed in earlier paragraphs (5.1.5 and 5.1.6), the above were some of the considerations that went into the design of the EAP curricula of the case study institutions. Thus, although none of the four case institutions specifically cited the CEFR, it is evident that the quality standards spelt out in the framework are not absent in their context. Under Section 2.1, it was noted that because of the illusiveness of the ‘general quality’ idea, the quality literature stresses that the operational definitions of quality must be specific and “relate to a specific purpose” and that the “fitness for purpose” concept of quality focuses on “customer needs”. It was argued that in view of this, the quality of EAP should be measurable based upon the principle of “fitness for purpose” in the student’s own view as well as that of the trainer. As a result, the teaching content is usually prepared in such a way that it matches the learner’s requirements (Robinson, 1991). This, as well as the characteristics identified below by Robinson, also hold true for the EAP course. It is observable that in all the case institutions the EAP course is:

- “Goal directed” – students learn English because they need it for study and work purposes.
- “EAP courses are based on needs analyses” – In all the case institutions, tasks that students have to do in English are clearly spelt out.
- “EAP programmes have clearly specified time frames” – In all the case institutions (except at the IUCG where it is taken for four years), the course is done during the first year and could be described as a foundation course in preparation for academic courses.
- “EAP learners are adults.”
- Students do not necessarily need specialist language – activities the students will engage in constitute the basis for courses.

(Robinson, 1991: 2-5)

5.1.6 What are the main differences between the public and private HEIs as far as their application of QA strategies for quality EAP is concerned?

This study covered four HEIs – two each from the public and private sectors. The case study institutions cite many QA strategies that they believe can contribute to quality EAP in their respective environments. Research question (e) sought to address the issue of distinctiveness between the public and private HEIs in terms of the QA strategies for quality EAP. Table 5-10 provides a summary of their distinctive contextual features, and Table 5-11 compares their quality assurance strategies for enhancing the quality of the course.

Table 5-10 Distinctive Contextual Features of Public and Private Case Study HEIs

Type/Source of funding	Public: (Wa Poly & UDS)	Private: (CUCG & IUCG)
Establishment:	1990s (1999 & 1992)	Post-1990s (2002 & 2001)
Standing/public perception:	More prestigious	Less prestigious
Enrolment:	Direct; mature	Direct; mature
Staffing:	Mostly full-time (200 full time at UDS, figures for part-timers not available; Wa Poly: 83 academic staff with only 3 part-timers)	Mostly part-time: E.g. 82% in the case of IUCG & 47% at CUCG
Time-tabling:	Largely full-time; sandwich	Largely full-time; sandwich
QA phenomena:	Internal and external	Internal, external and mentorship
EAP status:	Compulsory with shorter course duration E.g. 2 semester at Wa Poly and only trimester at UDS	Compulsory with longer course duration. E.g. 2 years at CUCG and 4 at IUCG

Table 5-11 Main QA Strategies in Public and Private Case Study HEIs for Quality EAP

Public HEIs: (Wa Poly & UDS)	Private HEIs: (CUCG & IUCG)
<i>Input</i>	<i>Input</i>
Admit mostly direct entry students with better grades from Senior High Schools.	Admit mostly students who could not get placement in public schools. Most students admitted have weaker grades than their peers in the public HEIs
<i>Process</i>	<i>Process</i>
Shorter course duration for EAP. E.g. only 1 trimester at UDS and 1 semester at Wa Poly.	Longer course duration for EAP, e.g. 2 years at CUCG and 4 at IUCG
Course objectives: Wa Poly: (Specific objectives: to help students in note making and developing reading skills; understand the conventions of usage and developing writing skills. General objectives: To enable students understand the communication process; be able to make notes, develop reading and writing skills; understand conventional usage; know differences between sentences, clauses and phrases, and the structure of a sentence; comprehend a passage, summarise a passage	Course objectives: CUCG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to: enhance writing skills and proper use of the English Language. IUCG: Compulsory 4-credit course for Year 1 to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> help “bridge the pre-tertiary gap in English grammar and comprehension.” (IUCG, 2011: 220). Level 200:2-credit Academic Writing in

<p>and understand figures of speech.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDS: communicate effectively within the business environment; • write proposals to raise funds for projects; • evaluate project implementation and report effectively to donors and project sponsors; • search for and win jobs; <p>have techniques of building rapport with customers, clients and employees</p>	<p>English I and II to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assist students with English reading and writing skills relevant for university work. <p>Academic Writing in English II (ISUC 202) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help students read and critique a variety of academic essays in their areas of study. <p>Advanced Writing Skills I (ISLA 301), a 1 credit to help students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “do close attentive reading and be able to distinguish main points from illustrative details; • improve skills in (i) summarizing extracts and essays; (ii) simplifying texts of moderate complexity; and (iii) writing both explanatory and argumentative synthesis of selected texts. <p>Advanced Writing Skills II (ISLS 401) to help students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the appropriate form of language (i.e. register) suitable for different audience types and purposes • write with concision and coherence, using logical methods of development, and • construct sentences that are consistent with intention and stylistic choice.
<p>Pedagogical emphasis by Publics:</p> <p>i) Student-centred approach adopted in teaching EAP</p> <p>ii) Students’ progress in writing skills, grammar, vocabulary, and other language mechanics assessed through take-home assignments, class exercises and examination</p> <p>iii) Marked scripts discussed with students</p> <p>iv) EAP teachers monitored/supervised by management, deans and HODs</p>	<p>Pedagogical emphasis:</p> <p>i)) Lesson plans outlining introduction, delivery, questions, evaluation, and conclusion adopted;</p> <p>ii) Relevance/practicality of lessons emphasized;</p> <p>iii) Student participation in class encouraged</p> <p>iv) Students’ progress in EAP monitored through periodic assessment;</p> <p>v) Learners taught to understand,</p> <p>vi) Marked scripts discussed with students</p>
<i>Output</i>	<i>Output</i>
Learning outcomes: Reference self-assessment results in Table 4.1-4 & Table 4.2-5, more public HEI students reported better performance after taking EAP.	Learning outcomes: Reference Tables 4.3-5 & Table 4.4-4, more students from the private HEIs still complained of weaknesses in basic communicative skills after taking EAP.

The summaries provided in Tables 5-10 and 5-11 show that the HEIs involved in this study were established within the same period, though the publics came a bit earlier. As a study that explores quality assurance strategies in EAP teaching at tertiary level in Ghana, this is significant since the period of establishment of these institutions fell within the era of the proliferation of private HEIs and the

subsequent formal establishment of QA regulatory bodies in Sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, contextual features like student enrolment, staffing, time tabling, QA framework, public perception of the institutions and EAP status have interesting implications. It is observable that the compulsoriness of EAP cuts across the public-private divide in Ghana. However, compared to their public counterparts, the privates have longer course durations for EAP. It was not surprising that student participants from the publics advocated for the extension of the EAP course to at least 2 years. An interesting question that arises is: Why do the private HEIs have longer EAP course durations than the publics? It is generally believed that private HEIs in Ghana are “last resorts” for students who fail to get admissions to the public HEIs which are considered more prestigious. It could therefore be argued that the practice of allotting more credit hours to EAP in the privates is a direct result of their enrolment of weaker students and the need for more remedial interventions through EAP. Thus, this strategy of the privates might have been adopted purely on grounds of expedience and not necessarily because they are more innovative than the publics in devoting more time to the course. Be that as it may, the study found it interesting that respondents from the public case study HEIs who are presumed to have stronger grades (including English language) feel there is need for extension of the duration of the course.

There is also a general public perception in Sub-Saharan Africa of some privates compromising quality for profit and oftentimes going in for part-time teachers, some of whom are less qualified to teach the courses they are asked to teach. In one of the case study private HEIs, as many as 82% of the teachers were part-timers. It is interesting to observe that this phenomenon notwithstanding, it was rather students from one of the public case study institutions who complained about “non-professionals” and part-timers teaching EAP, and calling for the recruitment of full-time professionals. In terms of QA practices, the strategies (input-process-output) adopted by the publics and privates to EAP teaching and learning are largely the same. Besides the comparatively longer course duration in the privates, course objectives and pedagogical emphasis are basically similar. However, the privates tend to emphasize more the use of lesson plans and the practicality of EAP. Internal and external QA mechanisms are also similar in both the public and private HEIs, except that the privates, as part of external assessment, are subject to mentoring by older public HEIs. Overall, as far as the quality of learning outcomes are concerned, student respondents from the public case study HEIs reported of greater improvement in their basic communicative skills after taking the EAP course than their peers from the privates. The observation on differences in outcome levels by respondents is significant as it tends to confirm a widely-held public conception in Ghana that private HEIs admit weaker students.

5.1.8 What things are the case study institutions doing differently that can be replicated elsewhere?

In response to research question (2), the case study institutions identified many practices that contribute to the enhancement of the quality of EAP teaching and learning within their various contexts. Table 5-12 summarizes specific practices considered unique to the case institutions and which could be replicated in other HEIs elsewhere. This is followed by a comparative summary of the five broad thematic areas presented in Table 5-13.

Table 5-3 Summary of Unique QA Practices in EAP Teaching and Learning in Case Study Institutions

	Wa Poly	UDS	CUCG	IUCG
Course Presentation	quality course presentation through: i) policies that require pre-course orientation; ii) compulsoriness of EAP and English for Specific (ESP) for minimum of two years in all programmes; iii) increase credit hours to three	i) maintain compulsoriness of EAP to first-year students; ii) extend to two years in all programmes; iii) increase credit hours to three; iv) regularize pre-course orientation to help learners appreciate the importance of EAP course	teacher must demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the subject	
Teacher's bearing in class	i) encourage learners; ii) relate well with them	teachers must be: i) punctual, regular, approachable, and encouraging; ii) respect views of learners; iii) humble enough to admit to students when they do not have an idea about a question asked by a learner; iv) pay attention to student feedback and incorporate into teaching approach; v) Lecturers must prepare well before they go to teach	i) teacher's physical appearance must command respect from learners; ii) teacher should also be punctual, understanding and approachable	
Mode of delivery	i) emphasize the teaching of grammar, writing and spelling	i) ensure clarity and practicality of lessons through the use of dialogue and	encourage students to read novels, magazines, newspapers, and	

	ii) encourage dialogue and discussions during tutorials iii) encourage speaking and oral presentation; iv) encourage ICT use in teaching	discussions; ii) encourage teaching of grammar, writing, spelling, phonetics, and indigenous communication skills; iii) encourage speaking through oral presentations; iv) use appropriate technologies, and tutorials; v) lessons should reflect real-world-of-work experience for learners; vi) teachers must be prepared for classes and be well organised during lectures; vii) inspire interest of their learners in the course; viii) be available for consultation by learners on issues relating to the course	journals	
Pedagogy	i) ensure effective and regular mode of assessment; ii) make EAP lectures interactive and practical; iii) vary methodologies when necessary; iv) simplify language learning by making it fun; v) organise study tours periodically for learners to experience reality in world of work; vi) prepare course outlines and objectives to serve as subject standards for effective delivery;	i) vary teaching approach as and when necessary; ii) adopt a style of teaching that would result in positive behaviour change in students; iii) provide appropriate/ relevant subject content to meet students' understanding; iv) adopt student-centred approach to teaching EAP vii) ensure that assessments are standard and relevant;	i) teach to the understanding of learners; ii) occasionally vary methodologies and materials in teaching EAP; iii) communicative approach to teaching English language; iv) more contact hours with students; v) encourage diligence on the part of the subject teacher;	i) ensure “ <i>full participation of all students</i> ” during lessons; ii) ensure student-centred approach that encourages practice among students in and outside the lesson period; iii) break large classes into smaller ones; iv) shift focus from “ <i>linguistic knowledge to communicative ability</i> ”; v) shift paradigm from “ <i>exam passing to general</i> ”

				<i>language acquisition</i>
Use of performance enhancement tools	i) provide relevant teaching and learning material; ii) appoint qualified and experienced EAP course lecturers; iii) make effective monitoring and supervision; v) broaden existing inspection scheme to include the review/appraisal of reports on tracer studies of the institution vi) insist on a credit (C6 or better) in English as an entry requirement for all applicants	i) provide relevant teaching and learning materials; ii) appoint and retain qualified and experienced professionals to teach EAP; iii) put in place monitoring and supervision mechanisms to assure quality; iv) put in place a self-assessment mechanism for teachers	i) expand library; ii) provide relevant teaching and learning materials; iii) appoint and retain qualified and experienced professionals to teach the EAP iv) ensure effective monitoring and supervision to realize course objectives; v) promotions and renewal of contracts should take into account in quality assurance reports to avoid lackadaisical attitude by full- and part-time teachers; vi) encourage learner-teacher appraisal	i) provide quality “up-to-date and standard English textbooks for learning;” ii) ensure that EAP lecturers hold PhD in the subject; iii) engage “total quality professionals for efficient and effective oversight QA;” iv) encourage class evaluation by students during lectures and examinations

Table 5-13 Comparative Summary of Main QA Practices in EAP Teaching and Learning

Wa Poly	UDS	CUCG	IUCG
Pedagogy	Mode of delivery	Pedagogy	Use of performance enhancement tools
Use of performance enhancement tools	Course Presentation/ Teacher’s bearing in class	Course Presentation	Pedagogy
Course Presentation	Pedagogy	Use of performance enhancement tools	
Mode of delivery	Use of performance enhancement tools	Teacher’s bearing in class	
Teacher’s bearing in class			

It is clear that though the practices are almost identical for all the case institutions, the degree of reliance on specific ones varies from institution to institution. This goes to affirm the general observation in the literature (2.2.1) that QA is context-specific (Mishra, 2006). While Wa Poly and CUCG identify quality pedagogy as the most important ingredient for ensuring quality EAP teaching and learning, IUCG and UDS consider it as the second and third most important factors

respectively. The use of performance enhancement tools and mode of delivering the course are rather deemed foremost in their respective contexts. Both UDS and CUCG cite the quality of course presentation as the second most important factor in enhancing the EAP teaching and learning. The former case study institution however puts this factor at par with teacher's bearing in class. Like CUCG, Wa Poly identifies teacher's bearing as least important in ensuring quality in EAP teaching and learning. Wa Poly goes on to rate the use of performance enhancement tools second; course presentation as third; and mode of delivery as the fourth most important practices. In the context of CUCG, use of performance enhancement tools is rather rated the third most important practice. Interestingly, neither CUCG nor IUCG cites mode of delivery in their responses.

Overall, it is observable that the practices identified by the case institutions are not novel per se and thus may not pass fully for the "uniqueness" tag. It must be acknowledged that these practices are not very different from those used in similar settings for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning of other disciplines. However, the innovations adopted by some of the case study institutions are worth noting for possible replication in other tertiary educational institutions offering EAP. On course duration, for instance, IUCG spreads out the EAP course to cover the four years of undergraduate studies instead of the one-year compulsoriness of the course in the other three case study institutions. This affords learners and teachers ample time to cover relevant topics in the course. According to Gillet (1996) and Jordan (2002), in other jurisdictions like the United Kingdom, EAP is generally considered a pre-sessional course with the length ranging from two weeks to one year. In the context of the case study institutions, where English is the L2 of almost every student, and where the foundation of the majority in English language is considered "poor", an extension of the length of the EAP course to two or more years as proposed by participants in this study would help enhance the quality of teaching and learning the course. Also, IUCG's example of breaking larger classes into smaller groups for EAP lessons for effective interaction between the teacher and learners, could be replicated elsewhere, especially the UDS where class sizes for the course can sometimes be as high 1,500 students.

5.2 Recommendations

This section makes general recommendations based on observed challenges regarding the application of quality assurance principles to enhance the quality of EAP teaching in the case study HEIs' processes. These recommendations follow from the research findings and the responses to the research questions from each of the case study institutions. Five broad areas were identified as requiring urgent intervention to enhance the quality of teaching and learning of EAP in the case study institutions. These include: improvement of the quality of teaching and learning materials, and the general learning environment; periodic review of the EAP curriculum and extension of the course duration; adoption of appropriate pedagogy and the development of institutional quality assurance frameworks.

I. Providing Quality Teaching and Learning Materials and Environment

In all the case study institutions, respondents complained about the quality of teaching and learning materials and the general physical learning environment (4.1.10; 4.2.10; 4.3.10; 4.4.10). To ensure the availability of quality TLMs, equipment, and infrastructure, government and funders (of the PHEIs) should increase budget allocation to the institutions. More spacious lecture halls; libraries; hostel facilities; relevant books; ICTs and other resources on EAP should be provided to enhance the teaching and learning of the discipline. Wa Poly and UDS are both public and depend on IGF and government subvention. As new HEIs located in a rural and asset-poor environment, Government should consider giving the two institutions some special concession by increasing their annual budget allocations substantially to supplement funds generated internally. Funders of CUCCG and IUCCG should equally step up their budget allocations to the two private institutions. Considering the invaluable contribution they are making to the provision of quality tertiary education in the country, the Government of Ghana should also consider increasing the annual allocations from the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) to private HEIs like CUCCG and IUCCG.

II. Curriculum Review and Extending EAP Course Duration

The study noted that none of the case study institutions made use of the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR) as a tool for assuring the quality of EAP. It was also observed that a vital QA strategy like curriculum review was not a regular feature in the institutions

involved in this study. It is therefore recommended that Ghanaian HEIS adopt the CEFR in their development of EAP curricula, pedagogy and assessment. The EAP curricula currently in use in Ghana tend to be silent on learner autonomy, which the CEFR emphasizes. In this technological age, it is quite surprising that the various EAP curricula are silent about the use of ICT, especially using of Power Point, teleconferencing and communicating via email. If the CEFR is considered a bit out of date because, besides mentioning email and online or offline computer conferences, it fails to refer to texting or the internet, then one can imagine the gravity of the complete silence of the EAP curricula on ICT use (Little 2011:385). In revising their curricula, it would be important for the case study institutions to include training for EAP students to acquire relevant communicative skills in these areas. Another interesting theme that tends to emerge in this study is that whereas the CEFR, through its set of “can-do” statements, seeks to describe the actual abilities or acquired skills of a learner at some specific levels of language study; the objectives of the EAP syllabi of Ghanaian HEIs tend to emphasize the desired instead – i.e. what the student “should be able to do” by the end of the course. On course duration, the study observed that with the exception of IUCG which allots ample time (seven semesters) for EAP, Wa Poly, UDS and CUCG did not have enough time for the course. It is therefore recommended that those three case study institutions consider extending the current length of the course to at least two years. The study noted that UDS has the shortest duration and should reconsider an increase in the number of contact and credit hours for EAP so that students can have enough time for the course.

III. Adopting Effective Teaching Approaches and Curriculum Review

On the most effective teaching approach for EAP in the case study institutions, it is recommended that they adopt an approach that takes into account the learning preferences of their students and approaches that are in keeping with the educational policies of Ghana and best practices in the tertiary sector in the country and elsewhere (Gillet, 2014). Rather than stick to one approach, the case institutions should combine student-centred approach, which some said they were already using, with a teacher-centred approach so students can benefit from the positive sides of both methodologies. This study found that respondents from all the four case study institutions advocated the review of their existing EAP curricula. It is recommended that the curricula, especially the one used by Wa Poly which is over twelve years old, be reviewed to

reflect current needs identified through a survey like this. Introducing phonetics, spoken English and reading tasks into the curriculum would help students get over difficulties emanating from their L1s and consequently improve their pronunciation and their confidence in reading and speaking. EAP teachers should also be encouraged to exhibit a positive bearing in class to create the necessary conducive social climate for student-teacher interaction. They should also display excellent pedagogical and delivery skills, as well as good self-expression.

IV. Developing an Institutional QA Policy

It is also recommendable that IUCG develop a QA policy and establish a unit to coordinate QA activities. Wa Poly should also restart the annual student-teacher appraisal which has stalled since 2008. The polytechnic should also institute the internal peer review of questions before they are sent to NABPTEx for moderation.

5.3 Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Future Research

In assessing the application of quality assurance principles to the teaching and learning of EAP in the case study institutions, this study found several similarities and differences in terms of institutional context, quality culture, quality assurance mechanisms, pedagogy, and curriculum designs. Recommendations were subsequently made in 5.2 based on these findings. The pervasiveness and compulsoriness of the EAP course in tertiary education environments in Ghana such that irrespective of students' course offerings they must of necessity take it, even if for a short period, makes it imperative that the QA principles for enhancing its teaching and learning be examined. Since every tertiary-level course in Ghana is taught in English, assuring the quality of English language teaching and learning would naturally have a "multiplier effect" on the quality of the other courses.

The two main research questions guiding this study are:

1. How are quality assurance principles being applied for quality EAP teaching and learning at tertiary level in Ghana?
2. What things are the case study institutions doing differently that can be replicated elsewhere?

Overall, the responses to research question 1) under 5.1.1 can be summed up in three main thematic areas:

- Observation of teacher's bearing in class and Pedagogy
- Periodic assessment/Appraisal
- Qualification/Experience

The results generally show that all the case study institutions recognise the relevance of teaching and learning English at tertiary level and the need for student ("customer") satisfaction. In all the institutions studied, conscious efforts are being made to guarantee the fitness of the EAP course for the purpose for which it was designed and that learners also have "value for money." To attain this objective, all the case study institutions have various internal and external QA systems in place. Students' feedback is obtained through observation, periodic assessment, and the discussion of marked exam scripts in class in all the institutions involved in this study. Teachers' experience, qualification, and full-time employment status are also identified as needful for enhancing EAP teaching and learning.

It is worth mentioning that the application of the identified mechanisms varies from institution to institution and is influenced by their various local contexts, institutional (public or private) and quality cultures; as well as their peculiar experiences. Wa Poly has a strategic plan and a QA policy document, but is yet to have a fully operational QA Unit. QA activities are, in the meantime, coordinated by the Planning Unit. As part of QA in students' assessment, EAP examination questions are moderated by external peer reviewers appointed by the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations (NABPTEX). Student-teacher appraisal, which used to be a regular annual practice there in the past, stalled in 2008 for some unclear reasons. Its public-funded counterpart, UDS, has a fully operational QA Unit, but had its first ever formal university-wide student-teacher/course assessment rather recently (2012). In the case of the two private HEIs studied, only CUCG has a QA Unit and carries out student-teacher assessment regularly. IUCG on the other hand is yet to establish one, but does conduct periodic student-teacher assessments too. Brainstorming is currently a regular feature in the university's QA activities, probably convenient for now because of its comparatively small size. Another finding of this study is that whereas the public HEIs are only subject to QA regimes overseen by the state-funded regulatory bodies, their private counterparts are subjected two regimes of quality

assessment – first, by the national regulatory bodies, and second, by their mentoring institutions. (Expand contribution of privates to QA). Thus, one could conclude that QA in the privates is more intensive than what pertains in the public HEIs. As far as QA and its contribution to quality EAP learning is concerned, the case of IUCG lends itself for reference. It constitutes a classic example of the distinction between QA practices in private and public environments. Even though the effectiveness of mentoring as part of the QA process in private higher education has sometimes been questioned because of the propensity for “cloning” (where the mentor institution expects the mentee to do things exactly the same way as they are done in the former) the IUCG’s spreading of the EAP curriculum over a four-year period could not be said to have been influenced by a mentoring public university.

Externally, while all the case study institutions are subject to QA regimes regulated and supervised the NAB and NCTE, the two case PHEIs, in addition, are required to meet quality assurance standards set by their mentoring institutions. Brennan and Singh’s (2010) assertion that QA has the potential of becoming a tool for both attack and defence for different players in the HE sector sees various degrees of subtle manifestations in all the case institutions (2.2.1). All the case study institutions are required to strictly comply with quality regimes imposed by the two main state-funded regulatory and supervisory bodies – National Accreditation Board (NAB) and National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) regarding the quality of students’ entry profiles, academic staff, and facilities. The price of non-compliance with these quality regimes is the denial of institutional and new programme accreditation or the forfeiture of re-accreditation for existing programmes.

Despite the varying degrees of dependence on the identified QA tools, all the four case study institutions studied aim at ensuring that the quality of the EAP course fits the purpose for which it was designed and ultimately lead to customer satisfaction.

To some extent the study also generated responses that generally showed the correlation between the effectiveness of the QA mechanisms and student satisfaction with the quality of the EAP course in the case institutions. A correlation analysis conducted on the responses shows varying degrees of significance. In the case of IUCG (private) for instance, the results pointed to a significant association between students’ expectation before taking the EAP course (termed locally as Language and Communication Skills) and improvement in their actual experience in

the course (Pearson = -0.269, p-value = 0.011). However, the relationship is negative in that as student's expectation increases, there is a decrease in improvement in their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills after the course. At UDS (public), the results showed a positive correlation between students' expectation and the skills acquired from taking the course, an implication that the QA strategies there are effective for enhancing the quality of the EAP course. This further implies that delivery meets students' demand for "value for money" and suggests a significant relationship between students' expectation before taking the EAP course and improvement in their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills after the course. A rather surprising finding is the sharp contrast with the responses from Wa Poly (public) and CUCG (private) that there is no relationship between the two, and that the gap between expectations before taking the EAP course is close and therefore has no bearing on improvement in students' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Overall, results from all the case study institutions pointed to Harvey's (2004-2013) conceptualization of QA as the "process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process, and outcomes) fulfils expectations and measures up to threshold minimum requirements." The case study institutions employ a broad spectrum of QA strategies ranging from student entry into higher national diploma and degree programmes and recruitment of qualified faculty (inputs); through their course of study in their chosen fields and the compulsoriness of EAP (process) and the eventual individual learner achievement at the end of the EAP course (outcomes).

On the distinctiveness of EAP from a QA perspective, it is noteworthy that it is broadly similar to other subject fields. Nonetheless, the following special factors are discernible:

- To the EAP learner, applying QA principles to language learning would enhance the general learning experience; make the EAP course more participatory, and consequently bring about enhanced learning outcomes (Grundtvig Learning Partnership, 2009-2011:9).
- EAP teachers stand to benefit, as QA would enable them stay focused on achieving positive learning outcomes through the adoption of a more learner-centred approach to teaching, and facilitate access to feedback from learners.
- Overall, adopting QA principles in EAP teaching implies a conscious effort on the part of the institution to recruit quality staff and effectively monitor their activities; provide

quality TLMs and create a congenial social climate needful for a rewarding EAP learning experience.

5.3.1 Conclusions

This research contributes to knowledge by exploring the application of quality assurance strategies in the teaching and learning of EAP at tertiary level in Ghana. Its main contribution is fact-finding about the different HEIs and their QA practices. Considering the pervasiveness of EAP in tertiary educational circles, assuring quality in its teaching and learning is crucial, especially in a multi-lingual country like Ghana where English is the only official language and the main medium of instruction from upper primary to university level is crucial for quality learning outcomes. As a research that examined how the quality of teaching and learning of English language for specific purposes in institutions of higher learning can be enhanced, this study is certainly significant. Its significance was taken a step further when the study highlighted the importance of an indispensable-yet-little-heard-of language teaching and learning resource like the CEFR in EAP curriculum design and assessment. Through its cross-case analysis of QA strategies in the public and private sectors of higher education in Ghana, the thesis contributes to the identification of the differences between the two sectors as regards the enhancement of the quality of EAP teaching and learning. The study also re-echoes the importance of the “student voice” in QA strategies in improving the quality of the teaching and learning EAP. It provided a rare opportunity for EAP students to air their views on a wide range of QA-related issues including the need for:

- adapting existing pedagogies by adopting a more interactive and student-centred approach to EAP learning;
- EAP teachers to be full-timers and masters of their field; approachable and encouraging;
- enhancing the physical learning environment through the provision of quality modern teaching and learning materials;
- reviewing the EAP curriculum regularly and,
- extending the course duration for EAP to a minimum of two years.

Undoubtedly, these findings are significant as they contribute to both policy and scholarship. This study helps re-emphasize the significant role of the student as a major player in the QA process. Sadly, however, it is observable that oftentimes the fear of being victimised makes the student remain silent about genuine QA grievances relating to processes and procedures that could enhance the quality of EAP. Quality assurance gives a voice to these key stakeholders – students. Thus, if their voices are heard, then that can contribute to real quality enhancement. In a multi-lingual environment like Ghana’s where

English is the L2 of most students, the tendency of linguistic intimidation is high. Encouragement rather than intimidation should therefore be the watchword if the quality of EAP learning is to be enhanced.

Overall, taking the QA literature, most of which was developed in Europe, and testing it in an entirely different context (i.e. Ghana) and specifically with EAP further affirms the importance of this study. Tertiary educational institutions have the responsibility of assuring the public that they are ‘doing the right things the right way’ through teaching and learning to produce quality graduates equipped with relevant skills like communicative skills in English for national development. Thus, another significance of this thesis lies in its contributing to the quality discourse in general and providing specific insights into the QA situation in the Ghanaian higher education landscape through English language teaching and learning.

5.3.2 Future Research

As far as future research is concerned, an area that would make interesting investigating is the role of the other players – government, parents, and employers in contributing to quality assurance and the enhancement of EAP teaching and learning in the case institutions or other similar settings. The issue of customer satisfaction touched on by this study, could be explored further in another study. Similarly, the subject of establishing the “effectiveness” of QA mechanisms at ensuring quality EAP in Ghana could also be explored further as the material of this study was not sufficient for an in-depth study on it. Conducting a research that would assess the ability of students or graduates to apply the skills acquired in English language or EAP course in solving everyday communication problems in the real world of work would be an equally worthwhile intellectual venture. It would also be interesting if the other facets of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) like Secretarial English and Business Communication are researched into to ascertain their effectiveness in enhancing learner’s communication and linguistic skills in their various fields of study. Another interesting research project would be to evaluate the impact of the socio-economic backgrounds of learners on the quality of their EAP learning experience.

Chapter 6 Reflections of the Author: Professional Practitioner and Personal Development

This chapter is written in fulfillment of a requirement of Phase 2 of the DBA (HEM): ‘Guidelines for Phase 2: Thesis’ that the candidate incorporates in the body of the thesis an account of their personal development as well as conclusions and recommendations deriving from the study. Presented below is a summary of my professional and academic development over the period of the DBA programme.

6.1 Introduction

My decision to pursue the DBA (HEM) was informed by a number of reasons. As a senior member in a young HEI mandated to provide opportunities for applied research and where collegiality is a key element in governance, I found in the programme an opportunity to acquire the relevant research and management skills to contribute to the development of the Wa Polytechnic and polytechnic education in general. The unique design of the programme, which allowed for maximum flexibility for candidates to spend little time away from their jobs and home, was also highly beneficial to me as it enabled me pursue my personal and professional development without any significant disruption of my workplace and domestic responsibilities. Another uniquely beneficial aspect of the programme was its flexible terms for payment of tuition fees, without which I would not have been able to go through the programme.

Having spent six of my first ten years of working in an academic in HE serving as Dean of Students’ Affairs (2004-2007), Vice Rector (2008-2009), and later Acting Rector (2009-2010), I considered the DBA programme ideal to help me better appreciate current trends and issues pertaining to teaching, learning and management in the twenty-first-century higher education landscape. The cosmopolitan nature of the DBA 7 cohort was another significant opportunity for me to gain from the exposure I had in interacting and sharing ideas with top experts in HE from various parts of the world. The emphasis of the programme on research also enhanced my research skills and activities and subsequently contributed to my being promoted (with a colleague from the School of Engineering) to the rank of Senior Lecturer in March, 2012. This was considered very significant because it was the first time in the twelve-year history of the Wa Polytechnic that an academic was promoted to that rank.

My interest in exploring the application of quality assurance principles to tertiary-level pedagogy and management was engendered by my exposure to both classroom teaching and institutional administration. These experiences exposed me to the multi-faceted nature of the concept and created in me a desire to undertake a study that would be beneficial to academics and HE managers alike in their endeavour to enhance the quality of their pedagogical and managerial duties. With English being the main medium of instruction at all levels of education in Ghana, and with English for Academic Purposes (EAP) being a compulsory course for all first-year students in HEIs in the country, I considered the latter a good unit of analysis for my research, the results of which I believe would be of benefit to me in my career as academic and also serve as reference for replication elsewhere.

I count myself most fortunate to have had my application for sponsorship approved by management of the Wa Polytechnic and the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) making it possible for me to obtain a full scholarship under the Faculty Development and Research Fund disbursed by the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund).

6.2 The DBA Programme

The programme was structured in two phases:

- A. Phase 1 involved classroom-based sessions during the residential periods; assignments; interaction with other students in the cohort; and tutorials with faculty.
- B. Phase 2: The thesis.

6.2.1 The Residential Periods

In all, there were five residential periods of one and two weeks during the initial phase of the DBA programme. I was able to attend only four of these. Even though I missed the first residential due to delay in the processing of my scholarship, reading and other related materials were sent to me by the programme administrators. Formal lectures constituted the main activities of each residential period. These were delivered by renowned academics drawn from the University of Bath and other universities within and without the UK aimed at offering participants the relevant framework and foundations for the DBA. The discussion and student presentation sessions were highly beneficial as they provided a forum for the DBA students to appreciate how best practices in higher education management were driving change elsewhere. The literature on HE introduced during the periods were also very beneficial as they opened a

window to appreciating the theories and best practices in strategic and organisational development adaptable to Ghanaian higher educational settings.

The international scope of the programme had its own unique advantages as well. Members of the DBA7 cohort came from countries including: Canada, England, Ghana, Ireland, Kenya, Malaysia, Oman, Sri Lanka, Turkey, UAE, Uganda, and the USA. The pool of invaluable knowledge and experiences made possible through the programme enabled participants to benefit immensely from the insights of colleagues from different national and institutional backgrounds. Another unique feature of the Bath DBA programme that I personally found very helpful was the small size of the cohort which enhanced the quality of personal attention and assistance from academic and administrative staff. This also provided a congenial atmosphere for colleagues to acquaint one another so easily, thus beginning the process of establishing professional networks that would extend beyond residential periods to the entire professional lives of participants after the programme.

The high sense of community developed through the residential periods was further deepened through the exchange of ideas through emails and other telecommunication systems like the “moodle” and linked-in. The occasional exchange of emails updating colleagues on individual work progress kept me on my toes throughout the programme. The course also made possible the making of new friends with whom I have kept and will keep in touch with even after the course. Already, two of them have extended invitations to me to visit their institutions and talk to their students.

6.2.2 The Assignments

The main assessment criteria for Phase 1 of the DBA programme consisted of four written assignments based on the units of study covered during the residential periods. Table 6-1 presents a summary of my assignments over the period.

Table 6-1 DBA Phase 1 Units and Assignments

DBA Phase 1 Unit	Assignment Title
Strategic organisational change in HE	Changes in the mission of the Wa Polytechnic in the last five years: An impact assessment of these and other changes affecting higher education.
Strategic issues in HE development and management	Institutional alliances and partnerships: The case of the Wa Polytechnic, Ghana.
	The Bologna process: Implications for internationalising higher education in Ghana.
Research Methods	Determining an appropriate research framework for exploring quality assurance in teaching and learning of EAP in the public and private sectors of Ghanaian higher education.

In 2006, the Wa Polytechnic launched a ten-year strategic plan. As the youngest public polytechnic in Ghana, many stakeholders in the HE sector lauded this step of ensuring that there was a roadmap for the development of the institution. Having served as chairman for both the Planning and Implementation Committees, my first DBA assignment was borne out of a personal desire to reflect on the extent to which the polytechnic's positioning had contributed to its development and realisation of its mission. In that assignment, I did a SWOT analysis of the strategic planning process; identifying the following as some of its major strengths: good leadership; existence of reliable stakeholders willing to contribute its development; ability to learn from the experience of more developed institutions; and its position as one of two tertiary institutions with unique programmes in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The late establishment of Wa Polytechnic; its fairly young and inexperienced faculty; its distant location from the national capital; and, its being situated in a region that is asset-poor and widespread rural poverty were identified as some of the weaknesses that could be turned into opportunities. Concluding, I observed in the assignment that the most significant changes that had taken place in the institution were occasioned by both external and internal factors. Externally the passage of the Polytechnics Act 745 of 2007 was identified as marking a turning point in polytechnic education in Ghana; with the launching of the Strategic Plan and Statutes in 2006 being of great significance as far as internal change factors were concerned. I also argued that the institution could capitalize on its seemingly disadvantaged positioning to mount courses and programmes, taking into account their relevance to the needs of the largely rural community where it is located. Another major observation made in the assignment was that prevailing circumstances

play a key role in determining the change process in an institution. Discretion and expedience are necessary when it comes to deciding whether to stick to the status quo or being realistic and adapting to meet prevailing challenges. When in June, 2011 I was invited to serve on a committee reviewing the strategic plan, insights acquired through the assignment helped me make some valuable inputs. For instance, it was observed that most of the major projects were to be funded by the government through the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund). In the face of dwindling government funding for equipment and infrastructure in recent times, it was proposed that alternative funding venues be explored by the polytechnic to finance some of the projects spelt out in the strategic plan that were yet to be implemented. Writing funding proposals to the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and other development partners that have interest in specific strategic objectives was suggested and included in the final recommendations to the Governing Council. With the only hostel project abrogated due to slow work pace by the contractor and delayed cash flows from the main sponsor, GETFund, management was also advised to make conscious efforts at increasing student enrolment through inviting credible private investors to put up hostels on campus for students.

In the second assignment, I sought to explore the positive (or otherwise) impact of strategic alliances that the Wa Polytechnic had entered into over a five-year period. Three main external partnerships with universities and colleges in Canada and the Netherlands were examined. Although I had been involved in all these partnerships, and had even served as the local coordinator of one them, the Ghana-Canada Establishing the Wa Polytechnic Project, my understanding of institutional alliances as facets of globalisation and internationalisation was relatively shallow. Lectures given on the subject during the residential periods provided me with a better appreciation of these concepts and their relevance in modern higher education. This stimulated my interest to do a review of alliances that my own institution had entered into with other institutions of like mission as the Wa Polytechnic's. I observed in that assignment that even though such institutional alliances were beneficial to the partners because they helped avoid reinventing the wheel; in the case of the Wa Polytechnic some of the objectives were unrealistic, overambitious, and not easily realisable within the project lifespan. A possible follow-up research, to find out what things participants would have done differently if they were given a second chance, would be interesting and worth undertaking.

My third assignment examined the possible implications of the Bologna Process for internationalising Ghanaian higher education. In that assignment, the international dimension of the process was acknowledged, seeing that though originally a purely-European affair, its main principles of harmonisation, credit transfer, and recognition of degrees and diplomas were fast catching on with other regions outside Europe. In Africa, for instance, the Association of African Universities has been advocating the idea of harmonisation for some time now. Locally, the Conference of Polytechnic Rectors (CORP), in collaboration with the relevant workers' unions, has almost completed the harmonisation of statutes and schemes of service for all polytechnics in Ghana. The Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa has also been organising seminars across the continent for stakeholders in polytechnic education to serve as platforms for the cross-fertilisation of ideas for innovation. One of my key contentions in the assignment was that any attempt at internationalizing higher education in Ghana should take into account the possible threats and opportunities within the broader context of liberalism, GATS and globalisation. Assignment 3 afforded me a deeper understanding of modern trends in higher education such as globalisation and harmonisation, and thus contributed to the better appreciation of English as a global lingua franca in my thesis. It also helped me appreciate the need for and the role of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) as a standard serving as benchmarks for language education in Europe and beyond.

My fourth assignment, which was on research methods, offered me the opportunity to reflect on the appropriate approaches and instruments for conducting a research into quality issues in language teaching. Doing that assignment was a unique opportunity to weigh the options available and to identify and adopt the right methods for conducting my research for this study.

6.2.3 The Thesis

Quality assurance has far-reaching impacts on all activities in higher education. In a similar vein, the use of the English language as the main medium of instruction from the basic to tertiary levels of formal education in Ghana is pervasive. Whether in the public or private higher educational sector, the teaching of English language, especially for academic purposes, is compulsory for all first-year students. As a language teacher, the pervasiveness of the discipline aroused my interest to explore how some HEIs in Ghana have enhanced language teaching and learning through the application of QA principles. My interest in conducting the research was

given a further boost by the wide public outcry in Ghana about the abysmal performance of tertiary students in the English language.

While reviewing the literature on QA as well as English language teaching and learning in Ghana, it became evident that not much work had been done in the area of applying quality principles to the teaching and learning of the language. My assignment on the Bologna Process and its implications for internalisation in Ghana helped me appreciate the impact of harmonisation in Europe. Relating this to my thesis, I observed how the Council of Europe, as a means of ensuring quality through standardisation in language education across the continent, had come out with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). With the absence of a similar framework to provide standards that would serve as subject benchmarks for the teaching and learning of EAP in Africa, and Ghana in particular, my thesis sought to identify quality mechanisms in language teaching that were unique to the case institutions and to recommend them for replication elsewhere. My research filled only one gap in this vast area intellectual activity; thus, leaving much scope for further research.

6.3 Conclusion

Participating in the DBA programme was to me a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Besides its direct contribution to my professional career, it also enhanced some personal qualities. On contribution of the programme to my professional work, my awareness and understanding of emerging trends in HE were greatly enhanced. Although I had been involved in strategic planning and institutional alliances before enrolling on the programme, lectures delivered by leading experts in higher education management afforded me a better appreciation of strategic issues, globalisation and internationalisation. As an employee of a young polytechnic located in a largely rural setting, I found topics like entrepreneurialism in HE as well the role of HEIs in regional development very exciting. In the face of increasing competition for dwindling state funding for public tertiary institutions amidst demands from students or their parents for “high quality” tuition, I consider the enhancement of my understanding of quality assessment issues in HE invaluable.

Whilst still on the programme, I successfully coordinated an orientation seminar for newly recruited academic staff of the Wa Polytechnic on tertiary methodology and administration in December, 2011. The seminar, which was attended by 43 participants, received the support of

the management, with the Rector approving funding for it and coming to sit in to observe proceedings and to affirm his support. Earlier in that same year, I served on a committee commissioned by the Wa Polytechnic Council to review a ten-year strategic plan. The committee successfully conducted the review and subsequently submitted a report to Council. I also had the opportunity to co-author a research paper with a colleague on “Student satisfaction with facilities and services as a quality assurance technique in higher education: Tamale Polytechnic in perspective.” The paper was published in Volume 6, Issue 1 of the National Council for Tertiary Education’s *Tertiary Education Series* in January, 2013. With the collaboration of another colleague of mine, a survey is underway to assess linguistic factors and their impact on student assessment. These achievements were obviously made possible by the skills acquired through my participation in the DBA programme.

On personal qualities that were enhanced through my participation in the DBA programme, specific mention must be made of the commitment, selfless dedication, and sacrifice exhibited by faculty and administrative and other support staff especially during the third residential in February, 2009. The BBC and other British media had reported that Britain was recording its heaviest snowfall in 20 years. Schools were closed down, including the University of Bath; but some lecturers and staff made their way through the heavy snow to teach and offer essential services to the DBA 7 cohort. I was challenged by this exemplary dedication to work. This left an indelible mark on my own personal commitment and selflessness which I hope to use to urge on my students and staff for enhanced productivity. Though I am currently more engaged in academic activities than in administration, the knowledge acquired through the DBA programme will be of immense help to me personally when later I am given administrative responsibilities. With the Ghana Government’s current plan of upgrading all polytechnics into technical universities, the acquisition of a DBA degree in Higher Education Management could not have come at a better time than now as it would enhance my prospects of being consulted by sister polytechnics and the regulatory bodies for expert advice.

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Appendix A: Correspondence to Case Study Institutions in Advance of Fieldwork



Bath BA2 7AY · United Kingdom

Telephone +44 (0)1225 383304

E-mail j.huisman@bath.ac.uk

Dear Sir,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: SOLOMON A. DANSIEH (STUDENT NO. 089082180)

This is to confirm that Solomon Ali Dansieh is a doctoral student at the University of Bath and is currently undertaking a research dissertation on the topic: “Quality Issues in the Teaching and Learning of English at Tertiary Level in Ghana.” A central part of the research is to undertake case studies of three universities and one polytechnic in Ghana and he would very much like to have your institution as one of the cases. The study is a piece of academic research that seeks to explore how each case institution applies quality assurance standards to the teaching and learning of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), locally known as Communication Skills.

I would be grateful if you could grant him access to the University/Polytechnic to enable him conduct interviews with relevant staff and students. In all, he would like to administer written questionnaire to students, and interview selected academic and administrative staff of your institution. The researcher will spend at least (5) days on your campus to administer the questionnaire and interview target groups comprising first year students, Quality Assurance Coordinator, Registrar and English Language/Communication Skills lecturers. During the period of his fieldwork on your campus, Mr. Dansieh would also be happy if he could be permitted to sit in and observe a typical Communication Skills lecture.

While anticipating your kind cooperation in this exercise, I would like to assure you that the researcher will conduct his work in strict compliance with general research ethics, and specifically those of the University of Bath accessible at http://www.bath.ac.uk/opp/resources.bho/Code_of_Good_Practice_in_Research-finalV3.pdf which the University holds in high esteem. If you would need further information on his research project, please contact Mr. Dansieh directly at following addresses and phone number:

Solomon A. Dansieh

Wa Polytechnic

P. O. Box 553

Wa, Upper West Region.

Email: sdansieh@yahoo.com

Tel.: 0244 717 406.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Huisman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Professor Jeroen Huisman

Director of Studies DBA Higher Education Management

DISTRIBUTION

The Registrar, Wa Polytechnic

The Dean, Faculty of Integrated Development Studies, University for Development Studies, Wa Campus

The Registrar, Islamic University College, Accra

The Registrar, Catholic University College, Fiapre

CC.: The Head, Quality Assurance Unit

The Head, African and General Studies Department, (UDS, Wa Campus)

The Subject Lecturer, Communication Skills

Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire and Interview Questions

Section 1: English Teaching and Learning (Students)

1. Do you consider the teaching and learning of English at tertiary level necessary
2. Would you say that the English Language course **meets/exceeds/falls short of** your expectations?
3. Has your reading, writing, speaking and listening skills improved since you started taking the course?
4. Do you consider the content of Language and Communication syllabus comprehensive enough?

Section 2: About the University/Polytechnic

5. How do you assess good teaching in your institution?
6. Do you consider the teaching environment for the English language course conducive enough?
7. In your opinion, are the objectives the Language and Communication (EAP) course being achieved at your institution?
8. How would you assess the quality of your library generally in terms of services and relevant reference materials for your courses?
9. Do you consider materials/textbooks relating to English language and Communication Skills adequate?
10. How current are the books available in the library?
11. How do you get relevant information for your studies?
12. Does your institution have access to reliable internet service?
13. How often do you have Language and Communication lectures within a week?

Section 3: Quality Issues and Quality Assurance

14. What are the various approaches in your institution to ensure quality language teaching?
15. Who, in your view, is a good teacher?
16. How would you rate the gap between what you were expecting in the Language and Communication course and what you are actually experiencing now?
17. Besides your regular Language and Communication lecture sessions, do you have other opportunities to meet your lecturer(s) for help relating to your studies?
18. Do your Language and Communication lecturers discuss marked scripts after quizzes and examinations with you?
19. Do you find such discussions helpful?
20. Do you think your lecturers use the suggestions you make during discussions to improve future exam and quizzes?
21. What do we understand when talking about “high quality tuition” and how can that be achieved within language learning?

22. As a learner, who do you consider a “good teacher” and what helps you to determine that?
23. How is good teaching practice evaluated and which tools do we have or should we use?
24. How do we implement quality in this institution and how do we make sure that teachers use quality tools?
25. What would be the common aspects of quality in language learning for your institution that could be recommended to other institutions as well?

Questions for Case Study Interviewees (Administrators)

1. What is a “good teacher” in the view of your institution?
2. What helps to assess good teaching?
3. Is there an institutional quality assurance policy in place?
4. a) Is there a quality assurance unit in place at your institution?
 b) What are the functions of the QA unit?
 c) Which of the functions impacts directly on teaching and learning?
 d) Which of these functions directly affects Language and Communication teaching and learning?
5. Does management consider the teaching and learning of English at tertiary level relevant?
6. What benefits does quality assurance have to your learners?
7. How do you implement quality policies in your institution and how do you make sure that teachers use quality tools?
8. Which quality assurance policies do you consider as having direct impact on the teaching and learning of English at your institution?
9. What influences the culture of your organisation? For example examination results, funding streams, external expectations, expertise of staff?
10. a) How does your institution express its commitment to quality?
 b) Is it clear?
 c) Is everyone aware of it?
 d) How is it shared?
11. In what ways does management of your institution build the institution’s capacity?
12. Does the structure of the institution support the functioning of teams?
13. a) Is team -review a feature of working processes at your institution?
 b) Is there a system for self-evaluation in your institution?
 c) If “yes”, who moderates it?
 d) Who is involved at individual level?
 e) Who is involved at institutional level?
 f) What mechanisms are applied?
 g) Is there any action taken in response to the outcomes of self-evaluation?
14. a) Is your institution inspected regularly?

- b) What does an inspection involve in the context of your institution?
 - c) How does the pre-inspection process/post-inspection process impact your institution?
15. Is there anything else you would like to be included in the inspection scheme so that it reflects more adequately the various aspects of quality teaching and learning?

Questions for Case Study Interviewees (Course Lecturers)

Section 1: Language and Communication Teaching

1. Would you say that the skills of students have improved since they started taking the Language and Communication Skills course?
2. What tools do you employ in assessing the progress of your learners?
3. Can you suggest ways and means of enhancing the teaching and learning of English language at tertiary level in Ghana?
4. a) As a multilingual society, what roles do you think the ethnic, linguistic and social backgrounds of students can play in their English language learning?
 b) Do some of your learners here exhibit such characteristics?
 c) If “yes”, which area of their English language communication skills is mostly affected?

Section 2: General Quality Issues

5. a) Who are the clients in the education system you work in:
students, parents, future employers, higher education, the state or all?
 b) Are they direct, indirect, internal, or external?
6. Considering yourself as a client, who provides services for you in this institution?
7. What needs and wishes should they satisfy to provide a high quality service?
8. a) How is good teaching practice evaluated at your university/polytechnic?
 b) Which tools are currently available at your institution for evaluating good teaching?
 c) Which tools would you recommend for evaluation exercises at your institution?
9. a) What subject standards and criteria serve as benchmarks for English language teaching and learning at your institution?
 b) What factors determined your choice of those benchmarks?
 c) How effective have these mechanisms been at enhancing the teaching and learning of English language at your institution?
10. a) What did you observe as the major weaknesses of majority of your students when you started teaching them this course?
 b) Does this challenge still persist or not?
 c) If “yes”, please give reasons.
 d) If “no”, how did you meet the challenge?
11. How do you get materials for teaching and research?
12. a) Do you consider the current curriculum detailed and relevant enough for the needs of learners?
 b) When was the current curriculum developed?
 c) Has the curriculum been reviewed since it came into use?
 d) If you were to review the English language curriculum, which new topics or areas would you recommend for inclusion?

Section 3: Internal Quality Systems

13. Does your institution have a quality assurance policy in place?
14. As a teacher, of what benefit is quality assurance to your students in their language lessons?
15. What are the procedures for the effective dissemination the QA models in your institution?
16. What are the responsibilities of the different actors – e.g. teachers, learners, administrators, parents and government – in assuring quality in your institution?
17. What quality control processes are currently being used in your institution?
18. a) What are the existing feedback mechanisms for observing and reporting on teaching and learning activities?
b) Who undertakes this function at your institution?
c) How does your institution utilize results of the quality control in the planning and delivery processes?
19. How would you rate the extent of involvement of all staff in quality assurance processes at your university/polytechnic?
20. Would you say that your institution is responding suitably to students' needs?
21. Would you describe the materials and learning aids currently in use at your institution as "quality"?
22. What are the various approaches in your institution with regard to ensuring quality in English language teaching?
23. a) What do you understand by "high quality tuition"?
b) How can that be achieved in tertiary level English language learning?

Section 4: Personal Information

1. Qualification: ... 2. Rank/Status: ... 3. Area of Specialty: ... 4. Experience: ...

Appendix C: Tables from Chapter 3

Table C3-1 Questionnaires/Interviews Administered, Expected and Actual Number of Respondents from Case Study Institutions

Institution	Students	Total No. Retrieved	%	Course Lecturers	No. Interviewed	%	Managers	No. Interviewed	%
Wa Poly	150	138	92	3	3	100	2	2	100
UDS	150	141	94	2	2	100	2	2	100
CUCG	150	120	92	2	2	100	2	2	100
IUCG	100	88	88	2	1	50	2	1	50
Total	550	487	89	9	8	89	8	7	88

Table C3-2 Sample Question and Emerging Categories

	Categories
Give three qualities of your ideal teacher	Knowledge (Knl), Punctuality (P)', Pedagogy (Pdgy), Understanding (U), Patience (Ptce)
What do you understand by the term "quality assurance"?	Value for money (VfM), Doing things right (DthR), Client Satisfaction (CSfn)
What do we mean when talking about "high quality tuition"?	Interactivity (Int), Student Performance (SP), Graduate Performance (GP), Pedagogy (Pdgy), Quality assessment (QAs)

Appendix D: Statistical Tables from HEI I: Wa Polytechnic

Table D4.1-1 Evaluating Good Teaching Practice at Wa Poly

	Frequency	Percent
Periodic assessment/appraisal	32	23.2
Observation of teacher's bearing/Pedagogy	95	68.8
Qualification/Experience	11	8.0
Total	138	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table D4.1-2 Correlation between Learner Expectation and Actual Learning Experience at Wa Poly

		Rate the gap between your expectation before taking the lang. and com. course and your actual experience now?	Have your reading, writing, speaking and listening improved after the course?
Rate the gap between your expectation before taking the lang. and com. course and your actual experience now?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 137	.124 .148 137
Have your reading, writing, speaking and listening improved after the course?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.124 .148 137	1 137

Table D4.1-3 Wa Poly Student Perspective on “High Quality” Teaching

	Frequency	Percent
Course presentation	9	6.5
Teacher’s bearing in class	23	16.7
Mode of delivery	19	13.8
Pedagogy	22	15.9
Learning environment	65	47.1
Total	138	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table D4.1-4 Wa Polytechnic Student Self-Evaluation in Communication Skills
76 respondents from first year and 62 from final year; total 138)

Year	Skill & Rating	No. of Students	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Weak	%Total
First	Reading	76	88%	12%	0	0	100
	Writing	76	71%	28%	1%	0	100
	Listening	76	73%	27%	0	0	100
	Speaking	76	75%	22%	3%	0	100
Final							
	Reading	62	79%	21%	0	0	100
	Writing	62	75%	22%	0	3%	100
	Listening	62	91%	6%	0	3%	100
	Speaking	62	67%	33%	0	0	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table D4.1-5 Students’ Perspectives on Qualities of a “Good Teacher”

	Frequency	Percent
Course presentation	16	11.6
Teacher’s bearing in class	87	63.0
Mode of delivery	4	2.9
Pedagogy	31	22.5
Total	138	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table D4.1-6 EAP Teacher Profiles

Participants' specialty	Academic rank					Experience
	Senior Instructor	Lecturer	Senior Lecturer	Associate Professor	Full Professor	
English	-	1	-	-	-	26 years
French/English Education	-	1	-	-	-	6 years
French/ English	-	1	-	-	-	6 years
<i>Total</i>	-	3	-	-	-	38 years

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table D4-1-8 Student Recommendations for Quality EAP Teaching

	Frequency	Percent
Course presentation	32	23.2
Teacher's bearing in class	12	8.7
Mode of delivery	20	14.5
Pedagogy	38	27.5
Use of performance enhancement tools	36	26.1
Total	138	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Appendix E: Statistical Tables from HEI II: University for Development Studies

Table E4.2-1 Student Views on Quality Teaching Assessment Tools at UDS

	Frequency	Percent
Periodic appraisals/Surveys/Oral Interviews	50	35.5
Observation	72	51.1
Unsure	19	13.5
Total	141	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table E4.2-2: Correlation between Learner Expectation and Actual Learning Experience at UDS

		Rate the gap between your expectation before taking the lang. and com. course and your actual experience now?	Have your reading, writing, speaking and listening improved after the course?
Rate the gap between your expectation before taking the lang. and com. course and your actual experience now?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 141	.400* .000 141
Have your reading, writing, speaking and listening improved after the course?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.400* .000 141	1 141

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table E4.2-3: Approaches to Quality Language Teaching

	Frequency	Percent
Existing QA systems	23	16.3
Steps and processes	87	61.7
Enhancement tools	24	17.1
Unsure	7	5.0
Total	141	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table E4.2-4: Student Perspective on “High Quality” Tuition

	Frequency	Percent
Course presentation	52	36.9
Teacher’s demeanour in class	39	27.7
Mode of delivery	20	14.2
Pedagogy	14	9.9
Learning environment	16	11.3
Total	141	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table E4.2-5 UDS Students’ Self-Evaluation in Communication Skills (72 Respondents from First Year and 69 from Final Year; total 141)

Year	Skill & Rating	Total No. of Students	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Weak	% Total
First	Reading	72	1%	33%	65%	1%	100
	Writing	72	6%	45%	48%	2 %	100
	Listening	72	14%	36%	46%	4%	100
	Speaking	72	17%	38%	38%	7%	100
Final							
	Reading	69	45%	14%	35%	6%	100
	Writing	69	29%	18%	49%	4%	100
	Listening	69	33%	29%	37%	2%	100
	Speaking	69	29%	33%	37%	2%	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table E4.2-6: Students' Perspectives on Qualities of a "Good Teacher"

	Frequency	Percent
Course presentation	32	22.7
Teacher's general demeanour in class	53	37.6
Mode of delivery	12	8.5
Pedagogy	44	31.2
Total	100	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table E4.2-7a EAP Teacher Profiles

Participants' Area of Specialty	Academic rank				Experience
	Lecturer	Senior Lecturer	Associate Professor	Full Professor	
English Language	1	-	-	-	2 years
Communication Studies	1	-	-	-	10 years
<i>Total</i>	2	-	-	-	12 years

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table E4.2-7b Learners' views on relevance of teachers' experience

	Frequency	Percent
No response	16	11.4
Essential	55	39.0
Important	59	41.8
Might be important	9	6.4
Not at all important	2	1.4
Total	141	100.0

Source: Fieldwork 2012

Table E4.2-8: Students' Recommendations for Quality EAP Teaching and Learning

	Frequency	Percent
Course Presentation	30	21.3
Bearing of teachers in class	30	21.3
Mode of delivery	58	41.1
Pedagogy	12	8.5
Performance enhancement tools	11	7.8
Total	141	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Appendix F: Statistical Tables from HEI III: Catholic University College, Ghana

Table F4.3-1 Assessing Good Teaching Practice at CUCG

	Frequency	Percent
Periodic assessment/Appraisal	54	45.0
Observation	46	38.3
Unsure	20	16.7
Total	120	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012.

Table F4.3-2 Correlation between Learner Expectation and Actual Learning Experience at CUCG

			Rate the gap between your expectation before taking the lang. and com. course and your actual experience now.	Have your reading, writing, speaking and listening improved after the course?
Spearman's rho	Rate the gap between your expectation before taking the Lang. and Com. course and your actual experience now?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.041
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.656
		N	120	120
	Have your reading, writing, speaking and listening improved after the course?	Correlation Coefficient	-.041	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.656	.
		N	120	120

TableF4.3-3 Student Views on “High Quality” Tuition

	Frequency	Percent
Course presentation	1	.8
Teacher’s demeanour in class	5	4.2
Mode of delivery	31	25.8
Pedagogy	16	13.3
Learning environment	67	55.8
Total	120	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table F4.3-5 CUCG Students’ Self-Evaluation in Communication Skills (63 Students from First Year and 57 from Final Year; total 120)

Year	Skill & Rating	Total No. of Students	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Weak	% Total
First	Reading	63	53%	19%	22%	6%	100
	Writing	63	46%	30%	18%	6%	100
	Listening	63	36%	45%	19%	0%	100
	Speaking	63	28%	48%	11%	13%	100
Final							
	Reading	57	38%	25%	12%	25%	100
	Writing	57	25%	63%	0%	12%	100
	Listening	57	25%	63%	12%	0%	100
	Speaking	57	13%	75%	0%	12%	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table F4.3-6a Students' Perspective of on Qualities of a "Good Teacher"

	Frequency	Percent
Course presentation	13	10.8
Teacher's bearing in class	74	61.7
Mode of delivery	5	4.2
Pedagogy	28	23.3
Total	120	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

TableF4.3-6b Student Perspective of a "Good Teacher"

	Frequency	Percent
Course presentation/Mode of delivery	25	20.8
Teacher's demeanour in class	61	50.8
Pedagogy	34	28.3
Total	120	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table F4.3-7 EAP Teacher Profiles

Participants' Area of Specialty	Academic rank				Experience
	Lecturer	Senior Lecturer	Associate Professor	Full Professor	
Teaching English as a Second Language	1	-	-	-	8years
African Literature	1	-	-	-	4 years
<i>Total</i>	2	-	-	-	12 years

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

TableF4.3-8 Learners' Views on Relevance of Teacher's Experience

	Frequency	Percent
Essential	64	53.3
Important	32	26.7
Might be important	8	6.7
Not at all important	8	6.7
No response	8	6.7
Total	120	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

TableF4.3- 9 Student Views on the Conduciveness of the Learning Environment

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	46	38.3
No	55	45.8
Unsure	19	15.8
Total	120	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012.

Table F 4.3-10a Level of student satisfaction with library facilities and services at CUCG

	Frequency	Percent
Very satisfactory	8	6.7
Satisfactory	65	54.2
Less satisfactory	43	35.8
Total	120	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012.

Table F 4.3-10b Adequacy of EAP-related Materials

	Frequency	Percent
Vey adequate	24	20.0
Adequate	37	60.0
Inadequate	84	16.7
Total	120	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012.

Table F4.3-11 CUCG Student Recommendations for Quality EAP Teaching and Learning

	Frequency	Percent
Course presentation	27	22.5
Bearing of teachers in class	19	15.8
Pedagogy	50	41.7
Use of performance enhancement tools	24	20.0
Total	120	100.0

Source: *Fieldwork, 2012.*

Appendix G: Statistical Tables from HEI IV: Islamic University College, Ghana

Table G4.4-1 Student Views on Quality Teaching Assessment Tools at IUCG

	Frequency	Percent
Periodic Assessment/Appraisal/Evaluation	16	18.2
Observation	72	81.8
Total	88	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table 4.4-2 Correlation Between Student Expectation and Actual Experience at IUCG

		Have your reading, writing, speaking and listening improved after the course?	Rate the gap between your expectation before taking the lang. and com. course and your actual experience now?
Have your reading, writing, speaking and listening improved after the course?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.269*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
	N	88	88
Rate the gap between your expectation before taking the lang. and com. course and your actual experience now?	Pearson Correlation	-.269*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
	N	88	88

Table G4.4-3 IUCG Students' Views on "High Quality" Tuition

	Frequency	Percent
Teacher's demeanour in class	20	22.7
Pedagogy	16	18.2
Learning environment	52	59.1
Total	88	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table G 4.4-4 IUCG Students' Self-evaluation in Communication Skills (45 Students from First Year and 43 from Final Year; Total 88)

Year	Skill & Rating	Total No. of Students	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Weak	% Total
First	Reading	45	2%	8%	82%	8%	100
	Writing	45	1%	6%	74%	19%	100
	Listening	45	8%	12%	70%	10%	100
	Speaking	45	2%	8%	64%	26%	100
Final							
	Reading	43	7%	18%	63%	13%	100
	Writing	43	5%	10%	75%	10%	100
	Listening	43	2%	15%	74%	9%	100
	Speaking	43	6%	18%	68%	8%	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2012.

Table G4.4-5a IUCG students' perspective on qualities of a "good teacher"

	Frequency	Percent
Course presentation	8	9.1
General demeanour in class	40	45.5
Mode of delivery	16	18.2
Pedagogy	24	27.3
Total	88	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2012.

Table G4.4-5b Students' Perspective on Qualities of a "Good Teacher"

	Frequency	Percent
Teacher's demeanour in class	67	76.1
Pedagogy	21	23.9
Total	88	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2012.

Table G4.4-6 EAP Teacher Profiles

Participants' Area of Specialty	Academic rank				Experience
	Lecturer	Senior Lecturer	Associate Professor	Full Professor	
Teaching English as a Second Language	1	-	-	-	2 years
Unknown	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Total/Average</i>	2	-	-	-	1 year

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table G4.4-7 Learner Views on Relevance of Teacher Experience

	Frequency	Percent
No response	12	13.6
Essential	31	35.2
Important	37	42.0
Might be important	6	6.8
Not at all important	2	2.3
Total	88	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012.

Table G4.4-8 IUCG Students' Views on the Conduciveness of the Learning Environment

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	54	61.4
No	34	38.6
Total	88	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table G4.4-9a Level of Student Satisfaction with Library Facilities

	Frequency	Percent
Very satisfactory	20	22.7
Satisfactory	42	47.7
Less satisfactory	26	29.5
Total	88	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table G 4.4-9b Adequacy of EAP Materials in the Library

	Frequency	Percent
Very adequate	21	23.9
Adequate	42	47.7
Inadequate	25	28.4
Total	88	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2012

Table G 4.4-10 Student Recommendations for Quality EAP Teaching

	Frequency	Percent
Pedagogy	40	45.5
Use of Performance enhancement tools	48	54.5
Total	88	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2012